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ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

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ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR  
PASSAGES IN HIS  
NON-POLITICAL SPEECHES, ADDRESSES  
AND WRITINGS

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1895. PRICE 10/-



FIGURE 1. A man with a history of alcohol abuse and depression.

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## **PASSAGES IN HIS NON-POLITICAL SPEECHES, ADDRESSES AND WRITINGS**

**ABRIDGED AND BRIEFLY ANNOTATED BY**

**J. G. JENNINGS**

**INDIAN EDUCATIONAL SERVICE**

**FROM THE COLLECTION ENTITLED**

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AS PHILOSOPHER AND THINKER**

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**LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.  
8 HORNBY ROAD, BOMBAY  
303 BOWBAZAR STREET, CALCUTTA  
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1913**

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## INTRODUCTION

CLEAR modern English, always cultured, often elevated, and at times rising to heights of eloquence ; touching upon themes of varied and living interest : human, sane, with a happy mingling of gravity and humour—such seemed to me the language of Mr. Balfour, in the collection of passages from his speeches and writings arranged by Mr. Wilfrid M. Short, in a volume entitled *Sir James Balfour as Philosopher and Thinker*. Being interested in Indian University education I felt that here was matter more capable of holding the attention of our students of English literature than the essays of writers who died in ages that even for the average Englishman can scarcely be made to live again. Here was English that is written and spoken now, and which a foreign student might adopt without fear of speaking a quaintly antiquated tongue. Simple, direct, virile, it should influence his speech and mind for good. The original collection of passages, however, seemed to me too large for the needs of the student reader and for the time at his disposal. By the kindness and courtesy of Mr. Short and Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co. I have been permitted to prepare this abridgment of the original book.

I have added a very few footnotes—all that I think are necessary, and perhaps more than are necessary. It is one of the chief merits of a contemporary author or speaker that his remarks, at least on subjects of current interest, need no elaborate annotation. The numbering of the passages in this abridged edition necessarily does not correspond with that of the larger edition. Beyond the omissions, the consequent change of numbering, the few footnotes, and necessary typographical modifications, practically no alteration has been made.

In the original unabridged edition Mr. Short distinguished by a difference of type between the views expressed by Mr. Balfour in writing and those expressed orally, and printed the former in large type and the latter in small. The object of this distinction was to emphasise the fact that a very large proportion of the passages included in the volume consisted of extracts from extempore speeches, printed exactly as reported. Such passages must naturally be judged from a different standpoint from that which would be taken in judging written work. Speeches have an excellence of their own which is very different from the excellence of an essay. It has not, however, been thought advisable to retain in this abridged edition any distinction of type, as only a few pages originally printed in large type have been included in this edition. The following extracts here included were printed originally in large type—“Decadence,” Nos. 11–20; “Fashion,” No. 57; “Genius, and the Production of Geniuses,” Nos. 58–61; “The

"Nineteenth Century," Nos. 67-71; "Progress," Nos. 77-84; "Reading," Nos. 90-98; and also the "Tributes" to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, His Majesty King Edward the Seventh, and the Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, Nos. 102, 103, and 104, which, however, were speeches, not written tributes, and were printed in larger type only in view of their exceptional character. All other passages in this volume should be read as speeches or portions of speeches, delivered extempore.

J. G. JENNINGS.

*August* 1913.



## EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE TO THE UNABRIDGED EDITION

As the title indicates, this volume is an attempt to present in a convenient form the more important and interesting non-political views to which Mr. Balfour has given expression in his published writings, speeches, and addresses, from the year (1879) in which he published his *Defence of Philosophic Doubt*, to the present year (1912).

It is worth bearing in mind not only that for nearly the whole of this period has Mr. Balfour been an active Member of Parliament, but that sixteen years of it have been spent in carrying out the duties of a Cabinet Minister. To these have been added the duties—ever-increasing—of Leader of the Unionist Party in the House of Commons for twenty consecutive years, and of Prime Minister for nearly three and a half years. The distinction of holding at one and the same time a leading position in the world of Politics and a recognised position in the world of Philosophy (Mr. Balfour would doubtless not wish it to be put higher than this) is not an every-day distinction, and a combination so exceptional must inevitably enhance, both in interest and in value, the utterances of its possessor.

It seemed, therefore, that a useful purpose might be served by recording in a single volume Mr. Balfour's views upon subjects of a non-political character, whether expressed in his published writings or in his

speeches: the more so, since the majority of them possess an interest extending far beyond the moment at which they were originally expressed. It is, of course, eminently advisable for any person desirous of obtaining adequate acquaintance with them to read them in their entirety; and it may be that the attempt made in this volume is not above criticism. On the other hand, it does not pretend to do more than thin out the trees, and to indicate, with fair accuracy, the true lie of the wood. In any case, it is hoped that the volume may prove acceptable if only because no small part of its contents consists of views extracted from *speeches*, where otherwise they would remain hidden and not easy of access.

It may perhaps be thought by some that views which deserved a place in this record have been excluded. It should be remembered, however, that the collection is ~~not~~ intended to reflect Mr. Balfour as a politician; and the aim has been to keep it as free as possible from views belonging to the domain of party politics. . . .

It will not be denied that though the view expressed orally often possesses an interest of its own, from the very fact that it is oral, unpremeditated, and due partly to the inspiration of the moment, yet, when seen in print, it is deprived of much which originally contributed to its success, and frequently finds in the individual responsible for it its most severe critic. Mr. Balfour himself observes in one of his volumes, that "no amount of linguistic pruning can convert a mediocre speech into a tolerable essay." . . .

In this connection, it is worth noting that Mr. Balfour speaks extempore, and does not write out any part, or parts, of his speeches beforehand, but either contents himself with a few rough notes, or speaks without notes at all.

Each extract is numbered, and reference to the corresponding number in the Index at the end of the volume will enable the reader to ascertain its source, and, in the case of an extract from a speech, the occasion and place of delivery of the speech. The dates printed at the end of the extracts indicate the years in which the views they contain were expressed.

I ought perhaps to add one further word. Copies of this volume will doubtless fall into the hands of many who are aware that it has been my privilege to be private secretary to Mr. Balfour for many years. The responsibility, however, for its compilation rests with myself, and beyond granting me permission to carry out the project, Mr. Balfour has not been concerned with it in any way whatever: indeed, that permission was given on the understanding that he should neither be responsible for any of the selections, nor see them before publication. I am fully conscious of the defects and shortcomings which the volume possesses, but, however many those defects and shortcomings may be, I earnestly hope that the attempt—perhaps a too ambitious attempt—to present Mr. Balfour's non-political views in a convenient and permanent form may prove not unacceptable to those who, whether in agreement or in disagreement with him upon matters political, entertain for him regard and admiration as a philosopher and thinker.

W. M. S.

*September 1912.*



## EXTRACT FROM A NOTE TO THE UNABRIDGED EDITION

For the material for this volume I am beholden to many; but to Mr. Balfour himself, of course, is my indebtedness primarily due, for without his permission the volume could not have taken shape at all.

My thanks are also due to the following publishers for their kind courtesy in allowing me to make extracts from the volumes and pamphlets for the publication of which they were originally responsible: . . . Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., the publishers of *The Foundations of Belief*; . . . Messrs. Douglas and Foulis, the publishers of *Essays and Addresses*; Messrs. P. S. King & Son, the publishers of the volume of the *Proceedings of the National Conference on the Prevention of Destitution*; . . . the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, the publishers of the Addresses on "Decadence" and "The Nineteenth Century"; . . .

I am also indebted to (1) the Editor of the *Parliamentary Debates* for his kindness in permitting me to use extracts from the "authorised" edition of Speeches in the House of Commons; (2) . . . (3) the Editor of the *Edinburgh Review* for permission to quote from the Article on "Handel", (4) . . . (8) the Secretaries of the National Conference on the Prevention of Destitution, for permission to quote from their volume of the Proceedings of the Conference; (9) the Labour Co-partnership Association, for permission to quote from their report containing Mr. Balfour's speech upon "Co-partnership"; (10) . . . (11) the Darwin Centenary Committee, for permis-

sion to use their report of Mr. Balfour's speech at the Centenary Celebrations ; (12) . . . and (13) the Newspaper Society, for permission to quote from their report of Mr. Balfour's speech to the Society in 1895.

Last, but not least, I owe my grateful acknowledgments to the Proprietors, and Editors of the following newspapers, from which extracts have been taken : the *Times*, . . . the *Morning Post*, the *Scotsman*, the *Glasgow Herald*, the *Manchester Courier*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Liverpool Daily Post*, the *Liverpool Courier*, the *Haddingtonshire Courier*, the *Hertfordshire Mercury*, and the *County and City of London Observer*.

[W. M. S.]

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# ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

## BACON<sup>1</sup>

1. FROM the very moment at which I rashly undertook to take a leading part in this ceremony I have been occupied in repenting my own temerity. For, indeed, the task which the members of this Society have thrown upon me is one which I feel very ill qualified to perform; one, indeed, which has some aspects with which many present here to-day are far more fitted to deal than I.

For the great man whose introduction into Gray's Inn some three hundred years ago we have met to commemorate was a member of this Society through his whole adult life. Here he lived most of his days before he rose to the highest legal position in the country; here, after his fall, he returned again to his old friends and dwelt again among his earlier surroundings. It was to this Inn that he gave some of his most loving work, adorning it, regulating it, and taking a large share both in its pleasures and its business. It would seem, there-

<sup>1</sup> The report of this speech (delivered at the unveiling of the memorial in the gardens of Gray's Inn, June 27, 1912) was subsequently corrected and revised by Mr. Balfour for the archives of the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn, and it is here printed in its revised form.



fore, to be fitting that the man who unveils the Memorial of this great member of Gray's Inn should himself be a member of Gray's Inn, and that a man who speaks in praise of a Lord Chancellor should himself know something of the law.

I possess, alas! neither qualification. But I am told by those who are more competent to form a judgment on the subject than I am that Bacon showed, as we might expect, great mastery of legal principles, and that although he did not equal in learning that eminently disagreeable personage, Sir Edward Coke, his great rival, yet that his views upon law reform were far in advance of his time, and, according to some authorities, had even an effect upon that masterpiece of codification, the *Code Napoléon*.

However this may be, I clearly have no title to say, and do not mean to say, a single word of my own upon Bacon as a lawyer. Upon Bacon as a politician it would not be difficult, and it might be interesting, to dilate. Although I think he lacked that personal force which is a necessary element in the equipment of every successful politician, he yet possessed a breadth of view, a moderation of spirit, which, had his advice been taken, might have altered the history of this country and even of Europe. It might be an attractive task for those who like drawing imaginary pictures of the historical "might-have-been," to conceive a man of Bacon's insight inspiring the policy of a sovereign who had the power and the wish to act upon his advice. Had such a combination existed at the beginning of the seventeenth century we might well have seen a development of Parliamentary and constitutional institutions effected at a less cost than civil war; and all the bitterness of political and religious

strife, which so greatly hindered our progress at home, and so effectually destroyed our influence abroad, might happily have been avoided.

But all this is a dream—a dream that could never have come true under a sovereign like James the First. Am I then to turn from the part which under happier circumstances Bacon might have played in public affairs, and discuss the part which in fact he did play? I confess that the subject does not attract me. Anybody who goes to the study of Bacon's life, remembering how his fame has been darkened by the satire of Pope and the rhetoric of Macaulay, must naturally desire to find that these great writers have grossly exaggerated the shadows upon their hero's character. And, indeed, they have exaggerated. Bacon was not a bad man. He was not a cruel man. I believe he loved justice. I am sure he loved good government. And yet, though all this be true, I do not think his admirers can draw much satisfaction from any impartial survey of his relations either with his family, his friends, his political associates or his political rivals. Much worse men than Bacon have had more interesting characters. They may have committed crimes, both in public and in private life, from which Bacon would have shrunk in horror. We condemn them, but we are interested in them. I do not think we ever feel this about Bacon the politician. Neither his relations with Essex, nor with Salisbury, nor with Buckingham, nor with Queen Elizabeth, nor with James the First, put him, however we look at the matter, in a very attractive light. He had not a high courage. I doubt his capacity for uncalculating generosity. I could have wished him a little more pride. I suspect, indeed, that his deficiencies in these respects militated even against his worldly fortunes. Such

men are used in public life, but they are not greatly loved nor greatly trusted.

But do not let us talk of Bacon as though his career were a great tragedy. It was nothing of the sort. He was a successful man, tried by any worldly standard you choose. He was a philosopher, and he was a statesman; and in the age in which he lived there were no two professions which promised the certainty of a more uneasy life or the chance of a more disagreeable death. His first patron, Essex, died on the scaffold. His second patron, Buckingham, was stabbed by Felton; and if you turn from statesmen to philosophers, how uneasy was the life of Descartes, how unhappy the career of Galileo, how tragic the end of Giordano Bruno. Well, these were Bacon's contemporaries—these were the politicians with whom he was most closely connected, and the philosophers who made his age illustrious. How much more fortunate was his career than theirs! He had not to fly from place to place for fear of persecution, like Descartes. He suffered no long imprisonment, like Galileo. He was never threatened with the executioner's axe, or the assassin's dagger. Nor did he go to the stake, like Bruno. And however dark be the view we take of hereditary honours, everybody will, I think, admit that it is better to be made a viscount than to be burnt.

If I now pass from those aspects of Bacon's life, with which, for one reason or another, I am either unqualified or unwilling to deal, I am left by a process of exhaustion to consider Bacon as a man of letters, an historian, or a philosopher. He was all three—a writer of most noble prose, one of the men most happily gifted for history that this country has produced, and in the character of a philosopher marking the beginning of a great epoch. As

a philosopher his fate has been mixed. He has been magnificently praised, both in this country and abroad, by men whose praise is worth much ; he has been violently abused by men whose abuse cannot be neglected ; and—worst fate of all—his achievements have been vulgarised by some of his most ardent admirers. I do not think this is the occasion—perhaps even this is not the audience—appropriate to the delivery of a full and balanced judgment on the precise position which Bacon occupies in the history of European philosophy. He has been regarded both by enemies and by friends as the first father of that great empirical<sup>1</sup> school of which we in this country have produced perhaps the most illustrious members, but which flourished splendidly in France during the eighteenth century. If this claim be good (I am not sure that it is) Bacon's philosophic position is, for that reason if for no other, a proud one. For whatever we may think of Locke and his successors,<sup>2</sup> the mark they have made on the course of speculation is indelible.

I do not, however, propose to deal with these niceties of philosophic history. I shall probably better meet your wishes if I try to say in a very few words what I think was the real nature of the debt which the world owes to Bacon ; and why it is that, amid universal approval, we are met here to-day to pay this tribute to his memory.

We shall make (I think) a great mistake if we try to prove that Bacon was, what he always said he was not, a maker of systems. He had neither the desire, nor I believe the gifts, which would have qualified him to be

<sup>1</sup> Experimental, inductive.

<sup>2</sup> Advocates of observation and experimentation. John Locke, 1632-1704.

the architect of one of those great speculative systems which exist for the wonder, and sometimes for the instruction of mankind. But if he was not a system-maker, what was he? He was a prophet, and a seer. No doubt he aimed at more. He spent much time in attacking his philosophical predecessors, and took endless trouble with the details of his inductive method. Of his criticisms it is easy to say, and true, that they were often violent and not always fair. Of his inductive logic it is easy to say, and true, that he did not produce, as he hoped, an instrument of discovery so happily contrived that even mediocrity could work wonders by the use of it. It is also true that he overrated its coherence, and its cogency. But this is a small matter. I do not believe that formal logic has ever made a reasoner nor inductive logic a discoverer. And however highly we rate Bacon as an inductive logician, and the forerunner of those recent thinkers who have developed and perfected the inductive theory, it is not as a logician, it is not as the inventor of a machine for discovery, that Bacon lives.

It is, however, quite as easy to underrate as to overrate Bacon's contribution to the theory of discovery. There are critics who suppose him guilty of believing that by the mere accumulation of observed facts the secrets of Nature can be unlocked; that the exercise of the imagination, without which you can no more make new science than you can make new poetry, is useless or dangerous, and that hypothesis is no legitimate aid to experimental investigation. I believe this to be an error. I do not think that anybody who really tries to make out what Bacon meant by his *Prerogative Instances*<sup>1</sup> and his

<sup>1</sup> Aids to induction, supplementary to it; see *Novum Organum*, ii., Aphorism 21. Prerogative means leading, or showing the way.

Analogies<sup>1</sup> will either deny that he believed in the unity of nature, and in our power of co-ordinating its multitudinous details, or will suppose that he underrated the helps which the imagination, and only the imagination, can give to him who is absorbed in the great task.

I return from this digression on Baconian method to the larger question on which we were engaged. I called Bacon a seer. What then was it that he saw? What he saw in the first place were the evil results which followed on the disdainful refusal of philosophers to adopt the patient and childlike attitude which befits those who come to Nature, not to impose upon Nature their own ideas, but to learn from her what it is that she has to teach them. Bacon is never tired of telling us that the kingdom of Nature, like the Kingdom of God, can only be entered by those who approach it in the spirit of a child. And there, surely, he was right. There, surely, his eloquence and his authority did much to correct the insolent futility of those verbal disputants who thought they could impose upon Nature their crude and hasty theories born of unsifted observations, interpreted by an unbridled fancy.

I do not mean to trouble you with many extracts. But there is one which so vividly represents Bacon, at least as I see him, that I believe you will thank me for reading it to you.

"Train yourselves," he says, "to understand the real subtlety of things, and you will learn to despise the fictitious and disputatious subtleties of words, and, freeing yourselves from such follies, you will give yourselves to the task of facilitating—under the auspices of divine compassion—the lawful wedlock between the Mind and

<sup>1</sup> Bacon classes Analogies or Parallels among Prerogative Instances; *Novum Organum*, ii., Aph. 27.

Nature. Be not like the empiric ant, which merely collects; nor like the cobweb-weaving theorists, who do but spin webs from their own intestines; but imitate the bees, which both collect and fashion. Against the 'Nought-beyond' and the ancients, raise your cry of 'More-beyond.' When they speak of the 'Not-imitable thunderbolt' let us reply that the thunderbolt is imitable. Let the discovery of the new terrestrial world encourage you to expect the discovery of a new intellectual world. The fate of Alexander the Great will be ours. The conquests which his contemporaries thought marvellous, and likely to surpass the belief of posterity, were described by later writers as nothing more than the natural successes of one who justly dared to despise imaginary perils. Even so, our triumphs (for we shall triumph) will be lightly esteemed by those who come after us; justly, when they compare our trifling gains with theirs; unjustly, if they attribute our victory to audacity rather than to humility and to freedom from that fatal human pride which has lost us everything, and has hallowed<sup>1</sup> the fluttering fancies of men, in place of the imprint<sup>2</sup> stamped upon things by the Divine seal."

There surely speaks the seer. There you have expressed in burning words the vehement faith which makes Bacon the passionate philosopher so singular a contrast to Bacon the cold and somewhat poor-spirited politician. There is the vision of man's conquest over Nature, seen in its fullness by none before him, and not perhaps by many since. There is recognised with proud humility the little that could be accomplished by one individual and one generation towards its consummation: yet how great that little was if measured by its final results.

<sup>1</sup> Credited.

<sup>2</sup> Nature, character.

It is no doubt easy to praise this ideal vulgarly, as it is easy to belittle it stupidly. It can be made to seem as if the Baconian ideal was to add something to the material conveniences of life, and to ignore the aspirations of the intellect. But this is a profound error. It is true that (to use his own phrase) he looked with " pity on the estate of man." It is true that he saw in science a powerful instrument for raising it. But he put his trust in no petty device for attaining that great end. He had no faith in the chance harvests of empirical invention. His was not an imagination that crawled upon the ground, that shrank from wide horizons, that could not look up to Heaven. He saw, as none had seen before, that if you would effectually subdue Nature to your ends, you must master her laws. You must laboriously climb to a knowledge of great principles before you can descend to their practical employment. There must be pure science before there is applied science. And though these may now appear truisms, in Bacon's time they were the prophecies of genius made long before the event. I should like to ask those more competent than myself to decide the question, when it was that this prophecy of Bacon began in any large measure to be accomplished. I believe myself it will be found that it is relatively recently, say within the last three or four generations, that scientific research has greatly promoted industrial invention. Great discoveries were made by Bacon's contemporaries, by his immediate successors, and by men of science in every generation which has followed. But the effective application of pure knowledge to the augmentation of man's power over Nature is, I believe, of comparatively recent growth. You may find early examples here and there; but, broadly speaking, the

effect which science has had, and is now having, and in increasing measure is predestined to have, upon the fortunes of mankind, did not declare itself by unmistakable signs until a century and a half or two centuries had passed since the death of the great man who so eloquently proclaimed the approach of the new era.

You may say to me—Grant that all this is true, grant that Bacon, in Cowley's famous metaphor,<sup>1</sup> looked from Pisgah over the Promised Land, but did not enter therein; or, as he said himself, that he sounded the clarion, but joined not in the battle;—what then? Did he do anything for science except make phrases about it? Are we after all so greatly in his debt? I answer that he created, or greatly helped to create, the atmosphere in which scientific discovery flourishes. If you consider how slightly science was in his day esteemed; if you remember the fears of the orthodox, the contempt of the learned, the indifference of the great, the ignorance of the many, you will perhaps agree that no greater work could be performed in its interest than that to which Bacon set his hand. “He entered not the promised land.” True; but was it nothing to proclaim in the hearing of an indifferent generation that there *is* a promised land? “He joined not in the battle.” True; but was it nothing to blow so loud a call that the notes of his clarion urging men to the fray are still ringing in our ears? Let us not be ungrateful.

This is a theme on which much more could be said, but I am sure that this is not the time to say it. There was a magnificent compliment paid to Bacon's powers of speaking by Ben Jonson—a compliment so magnificent that, in my private conviction, neither Bacon nor any

<sup>1</sup> Comparison with Moses, leading the Jews out of Egypt.

other speaker has ever deserved it. The poet alleges that the chief anxiety of those who heard the orator was lest his oratory should come to an end. This is not praise which in these degenerate days any of us are likely to deserve. But we need not rush into the other extreme: we need not compel our audience to forget all else in their desire that we should promptly sit down. That trial, at all events, I hope to spare you. I will not therefore dwell, as I partly intended, on such tempting subjects as the criticism passed on Bacon, and I may add, on Bacon's countrymen, by a great metaphysician of the last century. It may be enough to say that if Hegel thought little of Bacon, Bacon had he known Hegel would assuredly have regarded him as displaying the most complete example of what he most detested—the *intellectus sibi permisus*.<sup>1</sup> Assuredly these great men were not made to understand each other: though for us the very magnitude of their differences, by making them incomparable, may allow us to admire both. However this may be, I shall have played my part if I have succeeded in showing reason why all who love science for its own sake, all who, "looking with pity on the estate of man," believe that in science is to be found the most powerful engine for its material improvement, should join with this ancient Society in doing honour to the greatest among its members.

<sup>1</sup> Intellect given up to itself (to speculation as opposed to observation and experiment).

## **ROBERT BURNS**

2. IT is a singular fact that within a comparatively brief number of months I have had my attention directed to no less than four ceremonials connected with great literary men, and all these men were Scotchmen. There was the Burns celebration of last July; there was the most interesting ceremony which took place in London, at which I was present, in which the memory of Carlyle was the subject dealt with, in connection with the acquisition of the house in which he lived, in perpetual memory of the work which he did for literature; there was the Stevenson meeting in Glasgow—at which, unluckily, I could not be present, although I earnestly desired to be; and there was the meeting connected with the memorial put up to Sir Walter Scott in Westminster Abbey, a meeting in which I had the great honour of taking part. Now these four men whose names have thus within a very brief space come up in this public manner for public recognition before different audiences in the United Kingdom, were, as I have said, all Scotchmen, were in a manner all men who were not only Scotchmen by birth, but Scotchmen to the core—by training, by education, by love of their country. I do not suppose that four such men of common origin, and in a sense of common training, I do not suppose that four more different geniuses could be found in the literature of any other country.

Of all these four men without doubt the one who I will

not say is the greatest—for these comparisons are impossible—but the one who is nearest to the hearts of the great mass of his fellow-countrymen, is Robert Burns.

. . . Of the four great Scotchmen thus recently celebrated, all of whom wrote and lived within little more than the last hundred years, Burns, the first in time of the four, is the one who at this moment holds the first place in the hearts of the great mass of Scotchmen. I suppose that if we all set to work to account for this phenomenon we should find that, like most other phenomena, more than one cause contributes to it. It seems to me, indeed, that not only does Robert Burns hold a peculiar and unique position in the minds of Scotchmen, and among Scotch men of letters, but that he holds a unique position, so far as I understand the matter, if we survey the whole field of modern literature; for I know no other case—I do not speak dogmatically upon the point—I do not recall any other case in which we can say with the same confidence that a poet has occupied a place, and a great place, in universal literature, and that he is also the daily companion of hundreds of thousands of men and women who cannot be described as belonging to a class who make an occupation of literary study. I imagine that this unique fact, if unique fact it be, is in part due to the circumstance that Burns dealt so largely with those great elementary feelings, passions, and experiences which are common to every human being, whether he be literary or whether he be not literary, whatever his occupation in life may be, whatever be the labours which engross his time. For his best poems after all—not all his poems, but the bulk of his best poems—deal with such things as love and friendship, the joys of family life, the sorrows of parting—all things which come within the circle of our

daily experience. And he dealt with them simply as they are, in a manner which comes home to every man and every woman, which readily falls in with, which readily echoes, their own intimate sense of reality, which speaks to them, therefore, in tones of sympathy and of consolation, and which is present with them in all the experiences of their daily life. And while this is the character of the subjects of which Burns treated, he treated them at a time and in a manner which gives him an absolutely unique position in the development of British literature, for he was unconscious of his mission—he was unconscious of the great work which he was to initiate and foreshadow. He was the first of those great revolutionary writers—revolutionary I mean in the literary sense of the word—who made the early years of the present century so rich in instruction and so rich in genius. He was the precursor of Wordsworth and Scott, of Byron, Shelley, and Keats; but while he was their precursor, while he heralded this great change<sup>1</sup> in the literary fashions of his country, he spoke in tones which have deeply sunk into the popular mind, which appeal to people to whom the names of Wordsworth and Shelley, of Byron and Keats, are names, but little else.

I suppose I ought to add, in estimating this 'double quality of Burns' fame—I mean the popular quality and the universal literary quality—one fact which is obvious enough, but which has doubtless had its influence—namely, that he wrote in our Scotch vernacular. Now, it is necessary in a poet who is to occupy the position which Burns occupied among his countrymen, that he should speak the language of his countrymen; it is necessary that every man should feel not that he is

<sup>1</sup> From the Classical to the Romantic school.

reading a mere literary construction, but that the words which the poet uses are familiar words which he immediately understands, and which carry with them a wealth of association without which poetry is but a vague and empty sound. But the misfortune of popular poets has often been that while they spoke the vernacular of their country, this vernacular was so restricted in its area that the great literary heart, the great literary world which is confined to no country and to no people, was incapable of appreciating what they said, except through the imperfect medium of translation ; and, as we all know, translation, however admirable, and however excellent, and however painstaking, never has, never can, and never will, preserve the inmost life and essence of the work of art with which it deals. The fate of Robert Burns, however, was happier than the fate of those of whom I speak, for though he spoke and wrote in our Scotch vernacular, that vernacular is itself but a form of the great language which is now the birth-tongue of more people born into the world than any other literary language whatever. But while appealing, therefore, as only one writing the Scotch vernacular could appeal to the mind and feelings of Scotchmen, the great mass of the English-speaking world do not feel towards him as a foreigner must feel towards a language which he has not spoken from his youth. Rather do they feel, though here and there there may be words which are strange to them, that the language is after all the language of their own childhood, and they can cherish Robert Burns as a poet of their own language, a poet speaking their own tongue. One other cause may perhaps have done something to add to the universal character and world-wide fame which our poet enjoys, and seems likely in ever-increasing measure to enjoy in the future. That cause

is that in every part of the world you will find Scotchmen, and that wherever you do find Scotchmen you will find people who are making their presence felt in the communities in which they live. And wherever you find a Scotchman you will, I am glad to think, also find people who are by no means prepared to allow a careless or un-thinking world to forget the glories of their native land. Therefore it is that the fame of Burns has spread wherever Scotchmen have spread, and that there is a kind and degree of worship paid to his genius such as I believe is paid to the genius of no other poet of any kind or of any country. . . . . [1897.]

## CO-PARTNERSHIP

3. WE recognise that the industrial system of modern societies is an extremely complex whole, having its roots deep in an immemorial past ; bound, therefore, by all the ties which hamper<sup>1</sup> the present in its relation to the future because of the past : and we also recognise that the different industries, co-related as they necessarily are, and yet carried on under different conditions, may require different organisations, having to deal with persons of different degrees of knowledge, experience, and culture, and that it is equally impossible—it would be the worst form of doctrinarianism<sup>2</sup>—to lay down any absolute rule of industrial organisation to which every industry must conform, or else be regarded as utterly wanting in those qualities which bring it within a favourable view of those who rule this Society. It is quite true our ideal is complete co-partnership, and by complete co-partnership I mean that those who carry on the work shall be associated as partners in all that the work brings in. That, broadly speaking, is the way I should advocate what is meant by complete co-partnership. But we recognise as an approach to that ideal many arrangements which are far less complete or theoretically perfect. We applaud every arrangement which softens or obliterates the division between employer and employed, between owner and occupier. Everything that is a step in that direction is to us wel-

<sup>1</sup> Limit, bind.

<sup>2</sup> Pedantry.

come. Everything that helps along the road I have indicated is a step we desire to encourage, and, speaking for myself, I am certainly not one of those who believe that the ideal scheme can necessarily be carried out to advantage in every industry, in every department of productive effort. Certainly I cannot see that it can be carried out in the present development of society, and I am too disinclined to prophesy, or to lay down dogmatically the proposition that the time ever will come, or indeed ought to come, in which the whole industrial effort of the world will be framed upon one single idea or model.

4. If I thought that the introduction of the Co-partnership system was to prevent that initiative which depends upon men, and to transfer that initiative to the incompetent hands of a committee, I should despair of the process. But it does not mean that at all. I believe the workmen of this country are as capable as any other class of understanding the real force of the observations I have made. They know, or they will know, when this system gets into force for any length of time, that to carry it out in these days—not merely of competition, but in these days when industrial and scientific inventions are making such rapid changes in almost every industry of the country—if you are to hold your own in the struggle for existence against competitors who have every advantage of organisation and of initiative, they cannot afford to give up, and they will not desire to give up, the advantage which efficient able management can give them in the struggle for commercial existence. . . . [1908.]

5. Let me say one more word in order to remove what

I think is a misconception attaching to the movement in which we are all interested. People talk as if it were simply a movement to avoid contests between Capital and Labour, or as if, on the other hand, it was simply a movement to induce workmen to be more energetic and less wasteful in carrying out the work for which they are paid. Those are both excellent objects, but I do not—and I say it frankly—recognise this movement because it is immediately going to show results in the balance-sheets of employers or companies. I recommend it on much profounder grounds—grounds which go much deeper into the heart of things. After all, I think that in our ordinary speech we lose a great deal by talking as if the labour of a man whose life is devoted to labour was, in itself, an evil, but which becomes tolerable because he is paid for his labour and the payment he receives for his labour can be used to amuse him, or support his family, or in some other way, when the hours of labour are over. There is, of course, an element of truth in that; but I am quite certain that that element of truth is grossly exaggerated in ordinary speech. I do not say that labour is a pleasure, but I do emphatically say that unless the work we do in life can be made inherently interesting—I do not say pleasurable—we have not yet got at the root of any social problem. The art of life is to make uninteresting parts into an interesting whole. No man's work—I do not care what he works on—is in itself, take it bit by bit, of an exhilarating character. . . . [1908.]

6. The uninteresting parts do make an interesting whole, and I am perfectly convinced from observation that many of those who are engaged in what is called less elevating work than that of the House of Commons

—perhaps not rightly called less elevating—I am sure that many of those, unknown to themselves, really get most of their satisfaction in life not from their pleasures, but from their labours. And I think we often exaggerate the extent to which at present society fails in that ideal. Talk to an agricultural labourer working on a large well-managed farm, talk to an artisan engaged in some great industry, and you will find—at least I have found—that it is a great mistake to suppose that all they care for is the amount of wages they get per week, and what they can do with that wage. They are interested in the concern. They feel instinctively that they are part of a great machine, of a great industry involving the expenditure of much brains, organised power, capital, which uses the latest machinery, and which is up to date. They are glad to be parts of that machine. It gives them, or many of them, a certain satisfaction, and they take an intelligent interest in it, although, under our existing system, all that they can get out of it is the actual industrial weekly wage, irrespective of the prosperity or of the adversity of the business, so long as the business continues.

Now I am right in saying that the introduction of machinery has undoubtedly made in many industries the work of individual operatives extremely monotonous. A man or a woman has got to do one thing, and one thing only, all day and every day. They have got to look after one bit of machinery which contributes its own small quota to one complete result, and they have got to do that and nothing else. That is a worse position than what it was when machinery was much less developed than now, and when the individual workman had to do a great many different stages in the same ultimate pro-

duction ; and when, therefore, he had grounds for interest in his work, which seem almost removed from the modern operative who has got to deal with the most advanced form of machinery. But, on the other hand, there is a set-off to that in the sense of the extraordinary beauty and complexity of the total mechanism of which he individually manipulates a fragment. I do not believe that the consciousness of that great complex mechanism is absent from the mind of the intelligent workman, although he be dealing only with a small portion of it. If what I have said is true, or is in some near relation to the truth, is it not of enormous importance to us to try and increase this interest in a man's work, which I believe is the chief interest of his life outside the family affections ? The music-halls, public-houses, and so forth, the clubs—whatever it may be—may be, if properly used, a not illegitimate addition to the sum total of the felicity of those who use them. But I am certain that it is the work a man does which is the real thing in life. What you have to do is to increase the interest of the workman in the work he is doing, and that you can do more by furthering the Co-partnership system than by any other possible means. You then make him feel he is part of a great organised mechanism of production, that he is a unit in the great army which is producing the goods the world consumes. You not only make him feel that he is doing his share of the world's work in that way, and getting a fixed wage for it, but you make him feel that he is a shareholder in the particular department of co-operative work in which he is engaged. That feeling must increase a man's interest. It must make him feel that he will gain by everything that is being done well, while he will lose by everything that is being done ill,

and his own personal fortune is more or less bound up in the success of the industrial concern of which he is a member.' I venture to suggest that that is a very valuable asset, and that it goes deeper than the balance-sheet or the conflict between Capital and Labour.

There is one other consideration which, to my mind at all events, ought never to be absent from the thoughts of those who desire to develop industrial organisation on the line which commends itself to us who are on this platform. Modern industry is an extraordinarily complex and difficult organism. It<sup>1</sup> is an organism all inter-connected; it is all one business, but it is a business of the most extraordinary complexity. Some of it involves an expenditure of brains, of intellect, the exercise of courage, and rapid appreciation of a difficult situation, of which I do not suppose the outside public have the smallest conception. Even those who are engaged on a work have probably not any really intimate acquaintance with the difficulties which the owners of that work have got to face. It is because they do not fully appreciate them that some of the difficulties between Capital and Labour arise. The quarrels of mankind are not due to the fact that mankind are bad; they are due to the fact that mankind are ignorant. The more you can encourage mutual knowledge of each other's affairs by those who have to guide the enterprise, and the workmen on whom they depend for carrying out their plans—the more you bring these two classes together, and especially the more you make the workmen understand the difficulties of the employer—I am certain you will produce a class of men in this country who are fitted to deal with all questions, be they industrial or political or social, who do not exist

<sup>1</sup> A large business.

at the present time. I speak in the presence of some of the Labour members of the House of Commons, who do not agree with me on many points—I dare say they do not agree with each other on many points—but we all agree on this, that nothing can be better for the community as a whole than that the great artisan classes should have the closest possible knowledge, the most intimate knowledge possible, of business methods, difficulties, and risks, as well as of business profits. That great result you will get by Co-partnership, and I doubt if you will get it in any other way. But if Co-partnership, either in its complex form or any of its less developed shapes, becomes general, my firm conviction is that you will have done an enormous benefit for the social advantage of your country, not merely or chiefly because in the industries where Co-partnership exists there will not be strikes, not chiefly because there will be more energy shown on the part of the workmen, and a better balance-sheet of profits at the annual meeting of the concern, but because, in addition to those advantages, and quite apart from and above them, there is the additional interest in the great industrial work which will be instilled into the mind of every worker in the country, and that greater knowledge of all the complexities and difficulties of industrial life which is the true secret of the sympathy between one producer and another, and which is the great guarantee of social peace and the great hope of social progress. . . . . [1908.]

## COPYRIGHT

7. I THINK it is a profound mistake to confuse the rights of authorship with such things as patent rights. Property in patents is property in nothing but the idea. A man has an idea: he patents it, and no one else may use the idea till the patent is over. I quite agree that if you extended the length and obtained this monopoly of idea, it might be most oppressive. But copyright does not monopolise ideas. The only thing that copyright monopolises for a certain length of time is the form given to certain ideas by a particular genius or man of talent; and these are quite different things. There could not be a better illustration than that given by the honourable Member. He mentioned the works of Darwin. The works of Darwin are exactly one of those rare illustrations both literary of the great novelty and brilliancy of idea and conception, and also of form embodying those ideas. It is because Darwin was a great *littérateur*, and not because simply he was the inventor of a great theory of development, that his books are now read with so much interest and attention in the homes of the working classes and of all other classes of the community. There was no monopoly in Darwin's idea. On the contrary, after the *Origin of Species* was published, it was open to every man in the kingdom to give an absolutely full abstract of all Darwin's argument without missing out a single thing, and that would have been no interference

with copyright at all. As far as ideas were concerned, they were public property without monopoly, without any control of law courts, or anyone else of the whole intelligent world. What was the property was the admirable embodiment which Darwin gave to those ideas, not in one book, but in all his books, from the *Voyage of the Beagle* downwards. They are, and they remain, delightful literature, although, of course, the very magnitude of Darwin's work in the theory of evolution has enabled Darwin's successors to point out, possibly, deficiencies here and there in the great structure of which Darwin laid so deep and solidly the foundations.

There is, therefore, really a fundamental distinction to be drawn between the ideas embodied in a patent, or an idea contained in a book, and a copyright given to a particular author who embodies his idea in a particular form which lives occasionally—rarely—through the fifty years of monopoly which the Copyright Laws give him. When the honourable Member indicates that in his view we must not rate too highly the works of the poet, the author, or the inventor, because, after all, the poet, the author, and the inventor are all creatures of their age, that they all borrow from the past, that they all rest on the past, and that none of them could have been anything without the past, we all probably agree to that; but I do not think it bears out the conclusions of the honourable Gentleman. If we should have got on just as well without these people, why, then, their merit is very negligible. I am sure that the honourable Gentleman will be the first to say that give what share you like to the work of society in the production of works of genius, if science in this country had not had in physics, we will say, Young, Faraday, Kelvin, and the rest, science would not be where

it is. Nor would literature be where it is if we had not had in poetry Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson, and the rest. Literature would be in that case incomparably poorer. There is no use saying that these men got a good deal from society. The point is—what did society get from them? And if you look at it from that point of view, I do not think any recognition of the undoubted truth that all of us are creatures of our age, the products of our time, the result, for good or bad, of generations of incalculable and composite forces—no consideration of that kind should affect the judgment we come to as to the expediency of securing for a great man of letters the product of his toil.

Whatever you may say of other branches of industry or of work, no one will say that genius is overpaid. You may think that the successful financier, the fortunate inventor, the shareholders in some great successful firm, the landlord who suddenly finds his land near some growing city, are fortunate beyond their deserts, and are being rewarded by the growth of society beyond what you think they ought to get. But will anybody say that the man of genius gets more than his deserts? Is he overpaid? Does he get too much? I think if there be an error in our social arrangements in regard to the reward of this particular class of the community, it is that they are underpaid, and not overpaid. There are, of course, great exceptions. There are men, for instance, of admirable genius, whose works appeal not merely to a restricted and select few, but to a vast area of contemporary readers. There are not very many, but they exist; and anybody acquainted with the elements of literary history can give you easily the chief names. But compared with this small and fortunate band there

are an enormous number—well, not an enormous number, but a much greater number of people who have in their lives suffered from poverty and neglect, suffered from lack of consideration and poor emoluments, and yet whose names are now household words throughout the world and whose books are read with gratitude by generation after generation.

If in this Bill, or any other Bill, something can be done to give them their fair share of the good things of this life, and to reward adequately the immense benefits which they have conferred on their species, I do not think we ought to grudge it. . . . [1911.]

## CROMWELL

8. I AM the last person to deny that he was a very great Englishman, and a man whom—whether we be Englishmen, Scotchmen, or Irishmen—we should have no objection to seeing honoured by some permanent memorial. But I do not agree either with the violent attacks on him or with the laudations, which I conceive to be extravagantly worded, expressed by those who have spoken in this debate. I believe that Cromwell was neither the fiend represented by one set of critics nor the man of supereminent greatness represented by others. His reputation has, as we all know, gone through strange vicissitudes. Cursed after his death by the violence of party faction, his ashes scattered to the winds, his name scarcely to be mentioned in respectable society as of one possessing any virtues at all, he has now for more than a generation—largely through the labour of Mr Carlyle—been raised on a pedestal which, in my opinion at all events, is too high. Thomas Carlyle is largely responsible for what I cannot help regarding as something in the nature of an historic legend. Nobody would for a moment deny Cromwell was a great soldier. But remember he never was brought into conflict with any of the really great commanders of his time. He never had to fight Condé or Turenne; and those whom he had to fight, though of eminent bravery and average capacity, have not left in military history any great name. Then

Cromwell is sometimes described to us as the one heaven-born Foreign Minister whom England possessed during the whole of the seventeenth century. I think that that view of his character is altogether beside the truth. I am no great admirer of the kings of the House of Stuart, but from the very nature of their position it was absolutely impossible for them to have what is called a "vigorous foreign policy." They were in constant conflict with their Parliament. They never had at their command what Cromwell had—a standing army. If they had had at their command that standing army, able to do for them what Cromwell's did for him—make them superior to all laws and absolute masters of the resources of the country, whether the people were desirous of supporting their policy or not—then, though I do not contend for a moment that Charles the First or Charles the Second was equal to Cromwell in capacity, they would certainly have had a foreign policy different from that which circumstances obliged them to pursue.

And when we hear of the vigour of Cromwell's foreign policy, let me remind the House that he exercised that policy at a most opportune moment in the history of Europe for his purposes. Cromwell came between the strong rule of Richelieu<sup>1</sup> on the one side and of Louis the Fourteenth on the other; and we should have heard very little, probably, of the story of the Pope hearing the sound of his cannon at the Vatican if his period of power had coincided with the height of power enjoyed by Louis the Fourteenth. Let me say, further, with regard to that foreign policy, that, so far as we can judge after the event, he took the wrong side. While the coming

<sup>1</sup> Minister of Louis XIII of France.

danger to Europe was from the French, he supported the French against the dying monarchy of Spain. I, at all events, cannot join in the somewhat extravagant eulogies passed upon his foreign policy.

What are we to say about his domestic policy? I believe Cromwell was a sincere lover of men, that he was sincerely desirous of seeing constitutional Government carried on in this country, and that he was no enemy of Parliamentary institutions. I entirely agree that Cromwell would have been anxious to govern according to constitutional means had it been possible for him to do so. It was not possible for him to do so. By his ill-fortune rather than his bad management he found himself governor of England against the will of the country and the people. One honourable Member described Oliver Cromwell as "a good democrat." He may have been a good democrat. . . . At all events, that was the position in which Cromwell found himself through all the years of his reign; and every attempt which he made—and they were perfectly genuine and honest attempts—to substitute some form of constitutional government for the military despotism which was, in fact, the framework of English Government at the time, was thwarted by the House of Commons. Are we to describe in these terms of eulogy a man who, so far as I know, has left behind him not one single permanent trace of creative ability, and not one single mark upon our constitutional history. I am not aware of any, except perhaps that prejudice against standing armies which had been burnt into the English mind for generation after generation, and which was one of the greatest difficulties that successive English Governments had to contend with in carrying out a great constitutional policy at the end

of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries.

It appears to me that while it would be folly to deny to Cromwell the epithet of "great," he was, on the whole, through no fault of his own, a somewhat ineffectual, and certainly a most pathetic, figure in our history. But, Sir, holding those views—and we are all at liberty to form our own estimate of historic characters—is there anything in what has been said which should induce this House to take down the statue from the place where it is, and either destroy it or erect it elsewhere? Sir, I say there is nothing. . . . It is my good fortune to live near the battle-field of Dunbar, where Cromwell defeated my countrymen, gaining one of the greatest victories ever won by Englishmen over Scotchmen. Does any Scotchman on that account think he has a blood feud with Cromwell which no time can work out? Surely that is neither a generous nor a wise point of view. When communities are bound to live together, when peoples are placed under circumstances where a common life is absolutely necessary, surely it is not only Christian charity but the height of wisdom to forget those old injuries, those ancient far-off wrongs, which are being perpetually brought before the mind by memories of that kind—embittering differences, and perpetuating racial hostilities. I have been accused of inconsistency because I resisted public money being given to erect a statue to Cromwell in the year 1895, while assenting now to some one else giving a statue out of his private means to be erected in the precincts of the House. I believe there is not one shilling of public money expended on the statue, and I confess I do think it would be carrying these ancient political feuds very much too far if we were

to forbid private generosity to erect a statue to a great Englishman. There is hardly any action for which the Restoration Government has been more bitterly, and perhaps more justly, attacked than that of desecrating Cromwell's grave, taking up his ashes and scattering them to the winds. They did that deed under the bitter memories of wrongs scarcely healed over, and of wounds which were still green and fresh. Are we to do something parallel two hundred and fifty years after Cromwell passed away? Are we to be so mindful of any error he may have committed that even now we cannot tolerate within fifty yards of this House the statue of a man who was supreme Governor of this country for many years, a man who showed great ability, and a man to whom, however we place him in the hierarchy of English worthies, no one denies the title of "a great man"?

[1900.]

9. Your Worshipful Master has reminded us that to-day is the Commemoration Feast of this Company,<sup>1</sup> the emblem of which we all wear in our button-holes. It is the Commemoration Feast<sup>2</sup> which calls to our mind the universal enthusiasm—broadly speaking, irrespective of party, or religion, or civil differences—which welcomed back Charles the Second after his exile, to resume the ancient traditions of the country. Why was it that at that time there was an almost unbroken feeling of satisfaction that those traditions were resumed? It was not because Oliver Cromwell was a statesman indifferent to tradition. If anything is clear about that eminent,

<sup>1</sup> The Worshipful Company of Grocers.

<sup>2</sup> On May 29 Charles II landed at Dover, and the English monarchy was restored on this date.

though rather tragic figure in British history, it is that when the force of circumstances compelled him to deal as supreme ruler with the destinies of his country, he did his very best. He did his very best under the new circumstances to continue what he had found. He was no *doctrinaire* of the character of some few of his contemporaries, no *doctrinaire* of the type of which hundreds and thousands of the best educated men in all countries were at the time preceding and during the French Revolution. His was a very different, a very British type of mind ; and, if he failed—and, with all his genius, it is manifest that he did fail—it was not because he was indifferent to the traditions of his country, not because he had some cut-and-dried theory as to how men in the abstract, or how Englishmen in particular, should be governed,—it was because, by the force of circumstances, for which he may have been in part responsible, for which certainly he was not alone responsible, he found himself compelled to break with the traditions of the past, and because he broke with those traditions formally and absolutely. It was no use his trying to put up under different names with a broken continuity institutions similar to those of the past, perhaps on paper even better in some respects, but which nevertheless were in no continuous unity with that history to which the English people were profoundly and deeply attached.

I read a very interesting article in the *Times* to-day quoting from the great statesman and historian, Lord Clarendon, something which was half a prophecy and half a prayer, that the condition of things resumed at the Restoration might last in perpetuity, and the writer of that article said Lord Clarendon's prophecy and his hopes were disappointed and his prayers were unfulfilled, because

at no very great distance from the time when he died the Revolution of 1688 occurred. I think I am not misrepresenting what the writer said, but with great respect I dissent from that judgment. I think that since the Restoration there has been no break in the continuity. We are misled by the terms the "Great Rebellion" and the "Revolution." The truth is that the Great Rebellion failed, because it was not a rebellion, but because it was a revolution; and the Revolution succeeded, because it was not a revolution, but was a rebellion. Undoubtedly legally, technically, by every law of the country, the exclusion of James the Second was a rebellion. It was a success because it was not a revolution, and the continuity has gone on from the Restoration which we celebrate to-day to the very moment at which I am now speaking. It surely is no party sentiment to say that the failure of one of the greatest men England has ever produced, namely, Oliver Cromwell, successfully to break the continuity of English evolution and development, and the success which has followed upon what in many respects seems to the historian to have been but a poor triumph, the triumph of the Restoration,—the lesson to be drawn from that, a lesson which I believe all parties in this country would accept, is that if you really are to make the best of the future you must never ignore the past. . . . . . . . . [1912.]

## DARWIN

10. I HAVE been requested, by those who are responsible for the organisation of this celebration, to take that part in it which has been announced in no uncertain tone. I am conscious of but two qualifications which I possess for the task. The one is the deepest personal affection and the most unstinted admiration for the subject with which I am asked to deal; the second is that I yield to no man in my loyal devotion to the University of which Charles Darwin was one of the greatest ornaments. I think it may well thrill the minds of every son of Cambridge to reflect on the part which his University has played in leading great movements, those great cosmic movements whose effects are never obliterated by the progress of science, or the development of discovery, but which remain as perpetual landmarks in the intellectual history of mankind. This day and on preceding days we are concerned with Charles Darwin. Charles Darwin, though one of the greatest of men of science the world has seen, has, even in Cambridge, great rivals. Will it be erroneous to say that much of the best scientific thought of the eighteenth century was devoted to developing those great mechanical<sup>1</sup> ideas which the world owes to Newton? During that century men largely spent their time in developing ideas the origin of which we can with perfect certainty trace to the greatest ornament of our University,

<sup>1</sup> Astronomical.

and perhaps the greatest man the world has ever seen. Is it not true that the greatest scientific minds of the nineteenth century were largely occupied with another allied set of problems, those connected with the character of the ether and the energies of which ether is the vehicle; and that in Cambridge we may claim to have educated Young, Kelvin, Maxwell, Stokes—I do not carry the catalogue into the realm of the living—men whose names will for ever be associated with that vast expansion of our knowledge of the material universe, associated with the theory of the ether, the theory of electricity, of light, and that great group of allied subjects. If we have not in that department a clear and undoubted lead, which Cambridge men may surely claim that Newton gave in another department,<sup>1</sup> at least we have borne our fair share, and more than our fair share, of the heat and burden of scientific investigation. And we are now occupied with pardonable pride in turning our attention to one who in another wholly different sphere of scientific investigation has for all time imprinted in unmistakable lines his unmistakable signature upon the whole development of future thought.

I do not wish to exaggerate on such an occasion, because of all crimes Charles Darwin would have disliked exaggeration in anything connected with science, and most of all in anything connected with his own claims. Yet the fact remains that Charles Darwin has become part of the common intellectual heritage of every man of education, wheresoever he may live, or whatsoever be his occupation in life. The fact remains that we trace, perhaps not to him alone, but to him in the main, a view which has affected not merely our ideas of the develop-

<sup>1</sup> See line 22, p. 35.

ment of living organisms, but ideas of politics, ideas upon sociology, ideas which cover the whole domain of human terrestrial activity. He is the fount, he is the origin, and he will stand to all time as the man who made this great—as I think—beneficent revolution in the mode in which educated mankind conceive the history, not merely of their own institutions, not merely of their own race, but of everything which has that unexplained attribute of life, everything which lives on the surface of the globe, or even the depths of its oceans. After all Darwin was the Newton of this great department of human research; and to him we may look, as we look to Newton to measure the heavens or to weigh suns and their attendant planets. The branch of research which he has initiated is surely the most difficult of all. I talk of measuring the heavens and weighing suns; but those are tasks surely incomparably easy compared with the problem which taxes the physiologist, the morphologist, in dealing with the living cell, be it of plant or be it of animal or man. That problem, the problem of life, is the one which it is impossible for us to evade, which it may be impossible for us ultimately to solve; but in dealing with it in its larger manifestations Charles Darwin made greater strides than any man in the history of the world had made before him, or that any man so far has made since that great anniversary of the publication of the *Origin of Species*<sup>1</sup> which we have met this week to celebrate. We have heard this morning, from lips far more expert than mine, some estimate of the genius of that great man in whose honour we have met, and I feel it would be impertinent to add to anything which has been said.

<sup>1</sup> 1859.

One aspect, and one aspect alone, of Darwin's scientific genius seems to me to be insufficiently appreciated, at all events by the general public, of which I am one, and on whose behalf I may be supposed to speak. I mean the great achievement which Darwin made in science quite apart from—I may not say quite apart, but distinct from—that great generalisation with which his name is immortally connected. Let us assume that Darwin was not the author of the theory of the *Origin of Species*; let us assume that the great work which he did in connection with the ideas of the evolution of human beings had never taken place. Would he not still rank as one of the most remarkable investigators whom we have ever seen? I am, of course, not qualified to speak as an expert upon this subject, but I appeal to those—and there are many in this room—who are experts. Is it not true, quite apart from his theories of evolution, that in zoology, in botany, in geology, in anthropology, in the whole sphere of these great allied sciences, Charles Darwin showed himself one of the most masterly investigators, proved himself to have the power of the loving investigation of natural phenomena; showed himself to be able to cast a new and an original light upon facts the most commonplace and the most familiar, and to elicit from them lessons which men of science must always value quite apart from the great uses to which his genius was able to put them? It is, I think, satisfactory to see that in order to gain a place second to none in the growing list of great men of science, it is not merely necessary to have the power of ingenious generalisation which is given to many, to some who have not other powers. Darwin's great achievement was due to the fact that with this power of generalisation, and ancillary to

it, he had the power of investigation, the power of seeing the problems, that required solution in the world in which he lived, which, so far as I know, has seldom been equalled, and certainly never been surpassed in the biography of great men of science.

I cannot conclude without saying something about Charles Darwin the man, as well as Charles Darwin the great man of science. Some of us—I am proud to think I am one among many in this room—knew Charles Darwin personally. Those who had not that great honour and that great pleasure, have the next best thing to it in the biography, which reveals the man as clearly as printed matter can reveal living human personality. I am sure I am not in the least going beyond the bare and naked truth when I say that quite apart from his great scientific achievement, there never lived a man more worthy of respect and more worthy of love than this great naturalist. From the very nature of the case his great generalisation, from the very fact of its magnitude, produced, as was inevitable, violent controversy; and human nature in 1859 and 1860 was not different from human nature in 1909, and violent controversy then, as now, was prolific, and must be prolific, in misrepresentation. So far as I am aware no misrepresentation moved that equable temperament. Darwin never was betrayed into uncharitable observations; he never was embittered by any controversy, however unfair; but he pursued the even tenor of the man whose business it was to investigate the truths of nature and to state fact as he saw fact, to proceed irrespective of all the storm of indiguation and of misplaced antagonism to which his speculations at the moment inevitably led. That is a great quality. It is a quality which few men of science have possessed in

equal measure. Most scientific discoveries are so remote from the knowledge and immediate interest of uninstructed mankind that the man of science may pursue his way tolerably secure of escaping abuse from any but his scientific rivals. That was not Charles Darwin's fortune. He, through no fault of his—and, let me add, through no fault of the community to which he gave his discoveries—inevitably produced general controversy, for those discoveries attacked the conception which every man had formed of the world in which he lived and of the race to which he belonged. On the whole I think it is creditable to every one concerned that that controversy went on with so little bitterness and so little misrepresentation. But though there was bitterness and misrepresentation, yet never did it deflect for one instant, so far as I am aware, the strict path of scientific rectitude and of admirable charity which always characterised that great man. When we remember under what circumstances of ill-health Darwin pursued, decade after decade, these immortal investigations, I think our admiration for his temper, for his moral character, is augmented by a feeling of further admiration for the heroism with which he fought against these untoward physical conditions. Never did he lose his interest in his work, never was he discouraged. He went on from discovery to discovery, and from truth to truth, unwearied and unfatigued, leaving behind him the immortal reputation which we are here to celebrate.

I do not think that all the history of science has produced a genius whose memory a great University could more fitly celebrate, or one whose contributions to knowledge the representatives of other great centres of learning would more gladly assemble to honour. I have

ventured, perhaps too boldly, to praise Cambridge and those whom Cambridge has produced, but our guests will forgive in a son of Cambridge a momentary excess of emotion, if not of statement; and if you think I have exaggerated the fame of my own University, you will at all events agree that I have not exaggerated the merits of the man to whom we have met to do honour. For he was a man whose performances have become part of the common intellectual heritage of mankind, through whose ideas we look at every problem, not merely those connected with the lower organisms, but those connected with society, as an evolutionary question; and he was above all a man whose heroic disposition and whose lovable qualities would, even if he had not otherwise gained that immortal niche in the temple of fame, still commend him to every man who either knew him personally, or who by tradition has been able to form some estimate of the rare qualities which he exhibited. There is another speech to be delivered on this great theme by one incomparably more qualified than I can pretend to be to deal with Charles Darwin on the scientific side, and I will leave to him the grateful task of asking you to drink to the memory of Charles Darwin. . . . . [1909.]

## DECADENCE

[*The extracts under this heading are taken from the Henry Sidgwick<sup>1</sup> Memorial Lecture delivered at Newnham College, January 1908.*]

11. It is curious how deeply imbedded in ordinary discourse are traces of the conviction that childhood, maturity, and old age are stages in the corporate, as they are in the individual life. "A young and vigorous nation," "a decrepit and moribund civilisation"—phrases like these, and scores of others containing the same implication, come as trippingly from the tongue as if they suggested no difficulty and called for no explanation. To Macaulay (unless I am pressing his famous metaphor too far) it seemed natural that ages hence a young country like New Zealand should be flourishing, but not less natural that an old country like England should have decayed. Berkeley, in a well-known stanza, tells how the drama of civilisation has slowly travelled westward to find its loftiest development, but also its final catastrophe, in the New World. While every man who is weary, hopeless, or disillusioned talks as if he had caught these various diseases from the decadent epoch in which he was born.

But why *should* civilisations thus wear out and great communities decay? and what evidence is there that in

<sup>1</sup> 1838-1900; Knightbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy, Cambridge.

fact they do? These questions, though I cannot give to them any conclusive answers, are of much more than a merely theoretic interest. For if current modes of speech take Decadence more or less for granted, with still greater confidence do they speak of Progress as assured. Yet, if both are real, they can hardly be studied apart; they must evidently limit and qualify each other in actual experience, and they cannot be isolated in speculation.

12. We must not consider a diminution of rational power, whether relative or absolute, as constituting by itself a proof of national decadence. Holland is not decadent because her place in the hierarchy of European Powers is less exalted than it was two hundred and fifty years ago. Spain was not necessarily decadent at the end of the seventeenth century because she had exhausted herself in a contest far beyond her resources either in money or in men. It would, I think, be rash even to say that Venice was decadent at the end of the eighteenth century, though the growth of other Powers, and the diversion of the great trade routes, had shorn her of wealth and international influence. These are misfortunes which in the sphere of sociology correspond to accident or disease in the sphere of biology. And what we are concerned to know is whether in the sphere of sociology there is also anything corresponding to the decay of old age—a decay which may be hastened by accident or disease, which must be ended by accident or disease, but is certainly to be distinguished from both.

However this question should be answered, the cases I have cited are sufficient to show where the chief difficulty of the inquiry lies. Decadence, even if it be a reality, never acts in isolation. It is always complicated

with, and often acts through, other more obvious causes. It is always therefore possible to argue that to these causes, and not to the more subtle and elusive influences collectively described as "decadence," the decline and fall of great communities is really due.

Yet there are historic tragedies which (as it seems to me) do most obstinately refuse to be thus simply explained. It is in vain that historians enumerate the public calamities which preceded, and no doubt contributed to, the final catastrophe. Civil dissensions, military disasters, pestilences, famines, tyrants, tax-gatherers, growing burdens, and waning wealth—the gloomy catalogue is unrolled before our eyes, yet somehow it does not in all cases wholly satisfy us: we feel that some of these diseases are of a kind which a vigorous body politic should easily be able to survive, that others are secondary symptoms of some obscurer malady, and that in neither case do they supply us with the full explanations of which we are in search.

Consider, for instance, the long agony and final destruction of Roman Imperialism in the West, the most momentous catastrophe of which we have historic record. It has deeply stirred the imagination of mankind, it has been the theme of great historians, it has been much explained by political philosophers, yet who feels that either historians or philosophers have laid bare the inner workings of the drama? Rome fell, and great was the fall of it. But why it fell, by what secret mines its defences were breached, and what made its garrison so faint-hearted and ineffectual—this is not so clear.

13. Rome had thus unique sources of strength. What sources of weakness would our observer be likely to detect

behind her imposing exterior? The diminution of population is the one which has (rightly I think) most impressed historians: and it is difficult to resist the evidence, either of the fact, or of its disastrous consequences. I hesitate indeed to accept without qualification the accounts given us of the progressive decay of the native Italian stock from the days of the Gracchi to the disintegration of the Empire in the West; and when we read how the dearth of men was made good (in so far as it was made good) by the increasing inflow of slaves and adventurers from every corner of the known world, one wonders *whose* sons they were who, for three centuries and more, so brilliantly led the van of modern European culture, as it emerged from the darkness of the early Middle Ages. Passing by such collateral issues, however, and admitting depopulation to have been both real and serious, we may well ask whether it was not the result of Roman decadence rather than its cause, the symptom of some deep-seated social malady, not its origin. We are not concerned here with the aristocracy of Rome, nor even with the people of Italy. We are concerned with the Empire. We are not concerned with a passing phase or fashion, but with a process which seems to have gone on with increasing rapidity, through good times as well as bad, till the final cataclysm. A local disease might have a local explanation, a transient one might be due to a chance coincidence. But what can we say of a disease which was apparently coextensive with Imperial civilisation in area, and which exceeded it in duration?

I find it hard to believe that either a selfish aversion to matrimony or a mystical admiration for celibacy, though at certain periods the one was common in Pagan and the other in Christian circles, were more than elements in the

complex of causes by which the result was brought about. Like the plagues which devastated Europe in the second and third centuries, they must have greatly aggravated the evil, but they are hardly sufficient to account for it. Nor yet can we find an explanation of it in the discouragement, the sense of impending doom, by which men's spirits were oppressed long before the Imperial power began visibly to wane, for this is one of the things which, if historically true, does itself most urgently require explanation.

14. The Romans were brutal while they were conquering the world: its conquest enabled them to be brutal with ostentation; but we must not measure the ill consequences of their barbaric tastes by the depth of our own disgusts, nor assume the Gothic invasions to be the natural and fitting Nemesis of so much spectacular shedding of innocent blood.<sup>1</sup>

As for the public distributions of corn,<sup>2</sup> one would wish to have more evidence as to its social effects. But even without fully accepting the theory of the latest Roman historian, who believes that, under the then prevailing conditions of transport, no very large city could exist in Antiquity, if the supply of its food were left to private enterprise, we cannot seriously regard this practice, strange as it seems to us, as an important element in the problem. Granting for the sake of argument that it demoralised the mob of Rome, it must be remembered that Rome was not the Empire, nor did the mob of Rome govern the Empire, as once it had governed the Republic.

Slavery is a far more important matter. The magni-

<sup>1</sup> In the gladiatorial exhibitions.

<sup>2</sup> To the populace in Rome.

tude of its effects on ancient societies, difficult as these are to disentangle, can hardly be exaggerated. But with what plausibility can we find in it the cause of Rome's decline, seeing that it was the concomitant also of its rise? How can that which in Antiquity was common to every state have this exceptional and malign influence upon one? It would not in any case be easy to accept such a theory; but surely it becomes impossible when we bear in mind the enormous improvement effected under the Empire both in the law and the practice of slavery. Great as were its evils, they were diminishing evils—less ruinous as time went on to the character of the master, less painful and degrading to the slave. Who can believe that this immemorial custom could, in its decline, destroy a civilisation, which, in its vigour, it had helped to create?

15. There is no spectacle indeed in all history more impressive than the thick darkness settling down over Western Europe, blotting out all but a faint and distorted vision of Græco-Roman culture, and then, as it slowly rises, unveiling the variety and rich promise of the modern world. But I do not think we should make this unique phenomenon support too weighty a load of theory. I should not infer from it that when some wave of civilisation has apparently spent its force, we have a right to regard its withdrawing sweep as but the prelude to a new advance. I should rather conjecture that in this particular case we should find, among other subtle causes of decadence, some obscure disharmony between the Imperial system and the temperament of the West, undetected even by those who suffered from it. That system, though accepted with contentment and even with

pride, though in the days of its greatness it brought civilisation, commerce, and security in its train, must surely have lacked some elements which are needed to foster among Teutons, Celts, and Iberians the qualities, whatever these may be, on which sustained progress depends. It was perhaps too oriental for the Occident, and it certainly became more oriental as time went on. In the East it was, comparatively speaking, successful. If there was no progress, decadence was slow ; and but for what Western Europe did, and what it failed to do,<sup>1</sup> during the long struggle with militant Mohammedanism, there might still be an Empire in the East, largely Asiatic in population, Christian in religion, Greek in culture, Roman by political descent.

16. What grounds are there for supposing that we can escape the fate to which other races have had to submit ? If for periods which, measured on the historic scale, are of great duration, communities which have advanced to a certain point appear able to advance no further ; if civilisations wear out, and races become effete, why should we expect to progress indefinitely, why for us alone is the doom of man to be reversed ?

To these questions I have no very satisfactory answers to give, nor do I believe that our knowledge of national or social psychology is sufficient to make a satisfactory answer possible.

17. I assume that the factors which combine to make each generation what it is at the moment of its entrance into adult life are in the main twofold. The one pro-

<sup>1</sup> The capture of Constantinople by the Franks from the Greeks, 1204 A.D. ; and the failure of the Crusaders to hold Palestine.

## DECADENCE

duces the raw material of society, the process of manufacture is effected by the other. The first is physiological inheritance, the second is the inheritance partly of external conditions of life, partly of beliefs, traditions, sentiments, customs, laws, and organisation—all that constitute the social surroundings in which men grow up to maturity.

I hazard no conjecture as to the share borne respectively by these two kinds of cause in producing their joint result. Nor are we likely to obtain satisfactory evidence on the subject till, in the interests of science, two communities of different blood and different traditions consent to exchange their children at birth by a universal process of reciprocal adoption. But even in the absence of so heroic an experiment, it seems safe to say that the mobility which makes possible either progress or decadence, resides rather in the causes grouped under the second head than in the physiological material on which education, in the widest sense of that ambiguous term, has got to work. If, as I suppose, acquired qualities are not inherited, the only causes which could fundamentally modify the physiological character of any particular community are its intermixture with alien races through slavery, conquest, or immigration; or else new conditions which varied the relative proportion in which different sections of the population contributed to its total numbers. If, for example, the more successful members of the community had smaller families than the less successful; or if medical administration succeeded in extinguishing maladies to which persons of a particular constitution were specially liable; or if one strain in a mixed race had a larger birth-rate than another—in these cases and in others like them, there would doubtless be a change in the physiological factor of national character. But such changes are not

likely, I suppose, to be considerable, except, perhaps, those due to the mixture of races;—and that only in new countries whose economic opportunities tempt immigrants widely differing in culture, and in capacity for culture, from those whose citizenship they propose to share.

18. I at least find it quite impossible to believe that any attempt to provide widely different races with an identical environment, political, religious, educational, what you will, can ever make them alike. They have been different and unequal since history began; different and unequal they are destined to remain through future periods of comparable duration.

But though the advance of each community is thus limited by its inherited aptitudes, I do not suppose that those limits have ever been reached by its unaided efforts. In the cases where a forward movement has died away, the pause must in part be due to arrested development in the variable,<sup>1</sup> not to a fixed resistance in the unchanging factor<sup>2</sup> of national character. Either external conditions are unfavourable; or the sentiments, customs and beliefs which make society possible have hardened into shapes which make its further self-development impossible; or through mere weariness of spirit the community resigns itself to a contented, or perhaps a discontented, stagnation; or it shatters itself in pursuit of impossible ideals, or, for other and obscurer reasons, flags in its endeavours, and falls short of possible achievement.

Now I am quite unable to offer any such general analysis of the causes by which these hindrances to

<sup>1</sup> The process of manufacture (see the preceding section).

<sup>2</sup> The raw material of society.

progress are produced or removed as would furnish a reply to my question. But it may be worth noting that a social force has come into being, new in magnitude if not in kind, which must favourably modify such hindrances as come under all but the last of the divisions in which I have roughly arranged them. This force is the modern alliance between pure science and industry. That on this we must mainly rely for the improvement of the material conditions under which societies live is in my opinion obvious, although no one would conjecture it from a historic survey of political controversy.

19. Critics have made merry over the naïve self-importance which represented man as the centre and final cause of the universe, and conceived the stupendous mechanism of nature as primarily designed to satisfy his wants and minister to his entertainment. But there is another, and an opposite, danger into which it is possible to fall. The material world, howsoever it may have gained in sublimity, has, under the touch of science, lost (so to speak) in domestic charm.<sup>1</sup> Except where it affects the immediate needs of organic life, it may seem so remote from the concerns of men that in the majority it will rouse no curiosity, while of those who are fascinated by its marvels, not a few will be chilled by its impersonal and indifferent immensity.

For this latter mood only religion or religious philosophy can supply a cure. But, for the former, the appropriate remedy is the perpetual stimulus which the influence of science on the business of mankind offers to their sluggish curiosity. And even now I believe this influence to be underrated. If in the last hundred years

<sup>1</sup> The interest arising from a man's sense of possession.

the whole material setting of civilised life has altered, we owe it neither to politicians nor to political institutions. We owe it to the combined efforts of those who have advanced science and those who have applied it. If our outlook upon the Universe has suffered modifications in detail so great and so numerous that they amount collectively to a revolution, it is to men of science we owe it, not to theologians or philosophers. On these indeed new and weighty responsibilities are being cast. They have to harmonise and to co-ordinate, to prevent the new from being one-sided, to preserve the valuable essence of what is old. But science is the great instrument of social change, all the greater because its object is not change but knowledge; and its silent appropriation of this dominant function, amid the din of political and religious strife, is the most vital of all the revolutions which have marked the development of modern civilisation.

20. The conclusions at which I provisionally arrive are that we cannot regard decadence and arrested development as less normal in human communities than progress; though the point at which the energy of advance is exhausted (if, and when it is reached) varies in different races and civilisations: that the internal causes by which progress is encouraged, hindered, or reversed, lie to a great extent beyond the field of ordinary political discussion, and are not easily expressed in current political terminology: that the influence which a superior civilisation, whether acting by example or imposed by force, may have in advancing an inferior one, though often beneficent, is not likely to be self-supporting; its withdrawal will be followed by decadence, unless the

character of the civilisation be in harmony both with the acquired temperament and the innate capacities of those who have been induced to accept it: that as regards those nations which still advance in virtue of their own inherent energies, though time has brought perhaps new causes of disquiet, it has brought also new grounds of hope; and that whatever be the perils in front of us, there are so far no symptoms either of pause or of regression in the onward movement which for more than a thousand years has been characteristic of Western civilisation.

## EDUCATION : PUBLIC SCHOOL

21. It would be hard, I think, to say whether the English school system has been made by the masters for the boys, or by the boys for the masters. In truth, it is as natural and, therefore, as inexplicable a growth of our English soil as the British Constitution itself. For my part I am a hearty believer in that system. I hold that while a public school is the product of the English character, the English character has itself owed a great deal to the public school, and the merits of the public school are not to be adequately gauged either by the character of its curriculum or the success, however great, of the scholars whom it turns out. It has merits which nearly touch the character and the future of those never destined to excel in scholarship or in any other branch of study, but who, by the character which they have formed under the influences of a public school, have gone forth to every clime and to every land, and have done honour to the country which gave them birth. . . . . [1899.]

22. I hold that there is no probability, and there is certainly nothing less desirable, and certainly if it were probable it would not be desirable, that the dead languages—Greek and Latin—should be excluded from the place which they have occupied in the higher education of the whole of Europe for centuries past. But I think we have to recognise that we cannot quite look at education at the end of the nineteenth century with the same eyes with

which our forefathers looked at it at the period when science did not exist, and when no literature existed—no literature that had to be taken account of existed—except in two languages, neither of which was a living language. From the nature of things they were driven to base their education wholly upon the study of the great classical authors. They were driven to it not merely because those authors are, and must always be, an admirable instrument of education, but because there was in their time literally no other field of human knowledge or of human research to which they could turn for subjects in which the youth of their age might be adequately educated. We live, and we happily live, in a very different period. And if it be true, as I think it is, that the classical languages still form the most convenient instrument of education, let us be careful, let us who hold that view be careful, that we do not put it on excessive grounds, that we do not press our case too far, and that, in the face of many who think that the whole ancient scheme of education should be revolutionised, we do not give ourselves away by claiming for the classical system things which, after all, the classical system cannot give us. I hold with, I think, almost everybody who has studied the question that all education which is not in part, and in considerable part, a literary education is necessarilyaimed and one-sided; an education, that is to say, which does not make the person educated at home in some great imaginative literature, and which does not put him in sympathy with the great literary artists and the great thinkers of the past, and perhaps of a very different epoch, is an education which must leave undeveloped some of the finer sympathies, some of the more valuable qualities, which education ought to develop.

But let us be quite honest with ourselves. This literary education can only be really profited by, fully profited by, in those cases where the student is really at home in the language which embodies the literature which he is studying, and unless the Head Master and his colleagues are much more fortunate than those unhappy beings who had to educate me and my contemporaries, there must be, and I am sure there is, a very large portion of those who go through a classical training who do not gain that familiarity either with Greek or with Latin which surely is absolutely necessary if the real literary and imaginative qualities of those two great literatures are to be thoroughly assimilated and absorbed by the student. Do not let it be supposed that on that account I think those who perhaps never reach that degree of knowledge in those most difficult tongues have therefore wasted their time. I do not hold that view. I believe, for various reasons which I need not enter into now, from this fact, among others, that the body of knowledge to be acquired is a fixed body of knowledge, and not changing from year to year and almost from day to day, like Natural Science, from the fact that it concentrates attention, that it requires the pupil to be perpetually applying general rules to new cases, for the reason that it does not lend itself to "cram," for the reason that there is always an admirable body of persons competent to teach it—I believe that for even those not destined to be scholars in that full sense of the term which I have indicated, classical education may be an admirable training for the mind. Should I be going too far if I said that the majority of boys at our public schools do not get from their knowledge of Greek or Latin any real living insight into Greek or Latin literature? For them, I say, it is really imperative if we

believe, as I believe, in a literary education, that we should, through the medium of some more easily learnt language, either at school or after school, give them that knowledge of the past, what has been thought of the past in many lands by men of genius, which they could not have if they are to be restricted simply to the rudiments of Greek or Latin which they have been able to acquire at school. I therefore think that all those who believe in literary training—and amongst those I may rank, I suppose, every advocate of scholarship—I am sure that all those ought to do their best to encourage, I do not say by dogmatic or scholastic processes, but to encourage such other knowledge of these more modern literatures as shall enable those not so fortunate as themselves, and those who never can have the acquirements which they have attained, to give them some chance of obtaining all those benefits from a literary training which a literary training, and a literary training alone, is competent to give.

As for the controversy which goes on between the advocates of science and the advocates of literature, I really have hardly patience to speak of it, because it seems to me, as I have sometimes heard the two sides stated, utterly absurd. I cannot really conceive that any man, however enamoured of scientific method, should for a moment undervalue that insight into human nature and the interests which have always stirred human nature, and the manner in which those interests have been transformed by men of genius from time to time in the imaginative crucible of literature—I cannot imagine that such a training should be undervalued even by the most rigid advocate of scientific method. On the other hand, is it credible that in these days there should any man be found who should undervalue that curiosity about the

world in which we live, which science cannot indeed satisfy, but towards the satisfaction of which, after all, science is the only minister? There is a method of studying science, and there is a method of studying classical literature, or modern literature, which, no doubt, has educational value to no man—a method of study which may indeed benefit mankind in the sense that it increases knowledge, but which does nothing for the student, either to satisfy his imaginative curiosity, or to strengthen his imaginative appreciation of his fellow-man. You may study chemistry, and you may study Greek versification, in a spirit which will leave you as barren and poor after you have done it as it found you before you began it; but, after all, if we are to make the best of that heritage of great works which the men of old have left us, if we are to make the best of that insight into the physical world which from day to day is extending under the magic touch of men of science, it is surely folly that any man should think that he has done the best for himself until he has drunk as deeply as he may of both sources of inspiration. . . . . [1899.]

23. I confess that, as far as I am concerned, I have never been able to make a theory satisfactory to myself as to what is or is not the best kind of education to be given in those great public schools which are the glory of our country, and which, in their collective effect upon British character, I think cannot be overrated, but which are subjected, and perhaps rightly subjected, to a great deal of criticism as to that portion of their efforts which is engaged on the scholastic and technical side of education. I cannot profess myself to be satisfied with the old classical ideal of secondary education; and yet I am not

satisfied—perhaps I ought to put it more strongly and say I am still less satisfied—with any substitute I have seen for it. I have heard the old system defended on the ground that the great classical languages contain masterpieces of human imagination which have never been surpassed ; and, of course, that is true. But I do not think we can defend classical education in the great public and secondary schools on that ground alone. You have only got, after all, to make a simple statistical calculation, which perhaps we cannot put down in figures, but which every man with the smallest experience, perhaps with the smallest memory of what he was and what his school-fellows were at the age of 17 or 18, can make, to know that the master of the dead languages of a kind which enables them to enjoy those great works with their feet on the hearth—which is the only way to enjoy any work of literature, the number of boys who leave the great public and secondary schools with that amount of knowledge is a very, very small percentage. You cannot keep up a system of education for a very, very small percentage ; and, if that is the only defence of classical education, I think it will have to be abandoned except for the few who are qualified to derive all the immense advantages which to the few they are capable of imparting.

But when I turn to the other side and ask what the substitute is, then I confess I am even less happy than when I consider the classical ideal ; for I am quite sure—no, I am not quite sure, but I think—you will never find science a good medium for conveying education to classes of forty or fifty boys who do not care a farthing about the world they live in except in so far as it concerns the cricket field, or the football field, or the river—you will never make science a good medium of education for

those boys; for only a few are capable at that age, and perhaps at any age, of learning all the lessons which science is capable of teaching. I go further. I never have been able to see, so far as I am concerned, how you are going to get that supply of science teachers for secondary schools who have both the time to keep themselves abreast of the ever-changing aspects of modern science and to do all the important work which the English schoolmaster has to do, which is that not simply of teaching classes, but of influencing a house and impressing moral and intellectual characteristics on those committed to his charge. . . . . [1903.]

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24. IT is no doubt a comparatively new phenomenon that science and industry should be brought so close together. We are familiar with it, and we forget that it is not many generations old. I think you will find, if you look at the genesis of the great mechanical and industrial arts, that they have not, as a rule, in generations gone by, been based upon theoretical study, but that they have been the happy product of the rule of thumb carried out by men of great mechanical and industrial genius. But those days have passed. Science and practice have met together in a fruitful embrace, and now it is perfectly impossible that any nation should really keep in the van of industrial progress if it ignores and neglects the teaching of theoretical science ; and I believe, though not impossible, it is extremely improbable that theoretical science can be expected to advance with the rapid strides to which we have been accustomed in the last two generations unless it continues to learn, as it has learned, from the experience of practical men of business.

It certainly is an astonishing thing to reflect how science, which reaches to the heavens in its investigation, rests on the earth, and is mixed with some of the most prosaic details of our common life. The speculations of the most abstract mathematics, of the highest chemistry,

and of physics in all its branches, not only carry us into provinces which seem absolutely remote from human experience, as it is or ever can be, but they are also mixed up with dividends, with mills and manufactures, and with all the elements of the most material progress; and if it were not that we see by experience that theoretical science gains by this contact instead of losing, we should almost be afraid it would be vulgarised by its contact with the necessities of everyday experience. . . [1891.]

25. There is something necessarily ennobling, widening, and elevating in the study of the broad theories upon which the success of any particular processes may be found to depend. But do not let me be supposed even for one moment to undervalue in what I have said those older methods of education, which almost seem to ignore practical money-making utility, and which turn their attention to the development of the human mind. Make technical instruction as good as you will, it never can be everything; it never can satisfy the needs of the human mind; it never can satisfy the aspirations of any educational reformer: and I would pray those who are wisely and rightly giving up their time to the practical study of that which should be their business in life to recollect that side by side with that it is not impossible, and it is more surely beneficial, to carry on other studies not leading to a good income, not necessarily connected with what is called rising in life, which are nevertheless necessary to the human mind, if the human mind is to be equally developed in all directions. . . . [1892.]

26. There are many who think, and they give very strong reasons for thinking, that science is not suited

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to form the general subject of a course applicable to all classes, through which all classes of the community should be passed. There may be much, and I think there is much, in what they urge; but, on the other side, we may say, and say with truth, that there is no education better than a scientific education for those who desire to go in for it and wish to learn not a mere series of scientific formulæ by rote, but who wish to know the very essence of that which they are taught; who wish to understand the laws of nature which their teachers endeavour to instil into them, and who do not desire merely to become students of natural science for the purpose of passing a competitive examination, but who desire to know it for the greater object of understanding the works of God and nature, or for the necessary though inferior end of fitting themselves for some active and practical work in life. For such persons I believe that no education can be better than a scientific education; and if I leave that general question and come to the more restricted question of technical education, while I frankly admit that no man can learn in the classroom the same lessons that he will learn in the workshop, though I think that is a truth which should be impressed upon every man who comes to a technical school, yet I cannot doubt that in the face of advancing science, in the face of the increasing application of scientific method to industrial production, it would be sheer lunacy if this great country which depends absolutely, not merely for its greatness, but for its food, upon the success of its industries, were to ignore and despise the means of maintaining that supremacy which its rivals are spending hundreds of thousands a year to wrest from it. [1892.]

27. It is to those who, very often with no special practical object in view, casting their eyes upon no other object than the abstract truth, and the pure truth which it is their desire to elucidate, penetrate ever further and further into the secrets of nature, and provide the practical man with the material upon which he works. Those are the men who, if you analyse the social forces to their ultimate units, those are the men to whom we owe most; and to such men, and to produce such men, and to honour such men, and to educate such men, the Society whose health I am now proposing devotes its best energies.

I do not think that Englishmen need feel that they have been behind the rest of the world in evolving those root ideas which are the source of great discoveries, which are themselves great discoveries, and the source and root of other great discoveries. It may be, however—I think it is the fact—that though, as a nation, we have been as productive as other nations (I put it modestly) in the men of genius who have made these fundamental discoveries, I do not think, as a nation, we have sufficiently realised how great a part theory, how great a bearing theory, in these modern days, must necessarily have upon practice if we are to keep abreast of the rest of the world. We have produced great theorists, none greater; we have produced men of great practical genius, none greater. I am not sure, however, that at this moment we are not behind one, at least, of the great nations of the Continent—perhaps more than one—in the art of combining theory and practice, in the art of so welding together into one organic and self-supporting whole the man of genius who, at one end of the scale, discovers the new laws of nature which have

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to be applied, and the man of practice, at the other end, whose business it is to turn those discoveries to account. . . . . [1895.]

28. I am sure Mr. Bryce would agree with everything I have said upon this point, and everything I am going to say upon it, for I shall not go into controversial matter, because, while I think that those who object to technical education have their justification, it yet remains true that if you include, as you ought to include, within the term technical education the really scientific instruction in the way of turning scientific discoveries to practical account, if that is what you mean—and it is what you ought to mean by technical instruction—then there is nothing of which England is at this moment in greater need. There is nothing which, if she, in her folly, determines to neglect it, will more conduce to the success of her rivals in the markets of the world, and to her inevitable abdication of the position of commercial supremacy which she has hitherto held. I do not deny that if manufactures and commerce have an immense amount to gain from theoretical investigations, and if, as everybody will admit who has even the most cursory acquaintance; let us say, with the history of the discoveries in electricity and magnetism, pure science itself has an enormous amount to gain from industrial development,—while both those things are true, I am the last person to deny that it is a poor end, a poor object, for a man of science to look forward to merely to make money for himself or for other people. After all, while the effect of science on the world is almost incalculable, that effect can only be gained in the future, as it has only been gained in the past, by men of science pursuing

knowledge for the sake of knowledge, and for the sake of knowledge alone; and if I thought that by anything that had dropped from me to-night I had given ground for the idea that I looked at science from what is commonly called the strictly utilitarian standpoint, that I measured its triumphs by the number of successful companies it had succeeded in starting, or the amount of dividends which it gave to the capitalist, or even by the amount of additional comfort which it gave to the masses of the population, I should [feel that I had] greatly understate[d] my thought; but I know this great Society, while it has in view these useful objects, still puts first of all the pursuit of truth, which is the goddess to which every man of science owes his devotion. And truth, not profit, must necessarily be the motto of every body of scientific men who desire to be remembered by posterity for their discoveries. . . . . [1895.]

29. But there is another, certainly not less important, side from a national point of view—perhaps a decidedly more important side—I mean the complete scientific equipment of the student for those professions in which a thorough grounding in science, theoretical and practical, is now absolutely necessary if he is to make the most of himself and the most of the profession in which he is engaged. I have always been deeply interested in this aspect of the question, which is one specially considered in Germany and elsewhere, and the value of which we have perhaps in this country until recent years unduly ignored and neglected. It is an interesting question to ask ourselves how and why it comes about that it is only in the latter half of the nineteenth century that the absolute necessity of this thorough scientific grounding

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is now recognised in connection with great industrial enterprises. The only real reason I take to be this—that it is only after science has developed to a "certain point, and after industry has developed to a certain point, that you can successfully and usefully combine the two, and that there is forced on you the necessity of recognising that every advance in theoretic science—or almost every advance—is reflected in a corresponding advance in industrial enterprise, and that in a large measure industrial enterprise in the practical application of science is day by day giving birth to new scientific conceptions and new improvements, either in the machinery of discovery or in the result of discovery.

If anybody wishes to have a concrete illustration of these abstract truths, I would ask him to make the following comparison. Take, for a moment, the career of the greatest man of science whom this world has ever seen, Sir Isaac Newton. So far as I know—I speak under correction—neither by Sir Isaac Newton himself nor by anyone during his lifetime were any of his epoch-making discoveries turned to any practical industrial account either in his own country or in any other country. These discoveries were for the most part made while he was a comparatively young man—made, let me tell the younger members of my audience, at the happy time of life between twenty and thirty, when the inventive energies are freshest, and at which I hope many of you and your successors will add to the store of our knowledge—and Newton lived to a very advanced age. Still the fact was, as I have broadly stated it, that his inventions had no important effect on the industries of the world.

Now, compare with the career of Newton the career

of two of the greatest men of science we have seen in our time, Pasteur and Lord Kelvin—two of the greatest names in science—I was going to say in the science of all time, but certainly in the science of the last half of the nineteenth century. Almost every discovery of these two great men found its immediate echo in some practical advantage to the industries of the world. It would be mere impertinence on my part before such an audience to deal with these matters in detail, but the fact is familiar to almost everybody, and the extraordinary additions which both these great men have made in their different spheres to our theoretical knowledge have had an application of incalculable value either in the department of commercial production and navigation or in that of medicine and therapeutics. Can you have a more instructive contrast than that I have endeavoured to lay before you, between the immediate results of the scientific career of Newton and those of two of the greatest of his successors?

On what does the difference depend? On this, that theoretical knowledge and practical production have each so advanced, and come close together, are so intertwined, that nothing can happen in one branch that is not echoed in another branch, that practice and theory are simply the different sides of the same shield. He who advances theory knows that he advances practice, and he who advances practice may rest assured that some fruits of his labours will be found valued in theory. . . . . [1899.]

30. I have already adverted to the fact that there is a social side to the work of these Polytechnics. I rejoice that it is so. Mere lectures, however excellent, mere

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book-work and laboratory work, however painstaking, do not cover the whole field of education, and unless something of that life in common, which is so notable a part of our Public School and our University systems, enters into our system of education in these places, I think after all it will be but a partial and maimed system. I am glad to think that this social side has never been lost sight of by those interested in the Polytechnic movement, and that this magnificent hall in which I speak will fill a considerable function and make that social side easier and more effective. But I should think it a very disappointing result if we had to admit that even the technical and scholastic side has not its general educational effect. It would be a sad result if the modern division of labour, and the modern specialisation which is making itself so marked a peculiarity in every branch of knowledge, were absolutely to exclude the more general and excellent results which may be derived from education as a whole. I do not think myself that that specialisation need produce these results. On the contrary, so far as I understand the matter, the education given to all ages and professions and classes educated here is one which may be, in its results, of a most broadening character. I have told you that if the highest scientific education is to do its best for industry, it must be of the most thorough kind. . . . [1899.]

\* 31. "Superficiality"—we misuse the word superficial, I think, sadly misuse it. Superficiality does not depend on the amount of knowledge acquired. It is a quality rather of the learner than of the thing learned. The smallest amount of knowledge may be learnt in a manner which is thorough in the sense in which the word should

be used. Knowledge of the general principle may be obtained by those who have neither the time nor the ability to master all the details of any particular branch of science; but to say that that smaller modicum of knowledge is therefore superficial, and therefore useless, is wholly to mistake what superficial knowledge consists in and what education aims at. You may know very little, and not be superficial; you may know a great deal, and be thoroughly superficial. Superficiality is a quality of yourselves, not of the knowledge you acquire. I therefore feel that even those students of this Institution who come here merely to gain such an addition to their knowledge of a special handicraft as may enable them to excel in it, may carry away something of far more importance to them than the mere acquisition of technical skill. They may carry away that broadened knowledge of the laws of nature and of the progress of science which, to my mind, is not less liberalising, not less useful to education in the highest sense of education, than the most accurate knowledge of the grammar of our language or the works of an ancient civilisation. I make no attack, I need hardly say, on literary education, but I cannot admit that scientific education—even if that scientific education be humble in its amount, if it be stopped comparatively early in the career of learners—I cannot admit that that is not capable of producing as beneficial educational effects on the taught as any system of education that the ingenuity of the world has yet succeeded in devising. . . . [1899.]

32. I feel it the more incumbent upon me to urge upon you the claims and the glories of science pursued for itself from the fact that they cannot directly appeal

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to the general interest of the mass of mankind. We ought not to wonder, we ought not to criticise, and we ought not to be surprised that, among the great number of persons deeply interested and astonished at, for example, anything so interesting and sensational as wireless telegraphy, few remember the inventions which have made that telegraphy possible; they neither know of nor take interest in the investigations of a Maxwell or the experiments of a Hertz, which, after all, are at the base of the whole thing, without which any such discovery as wireless telegraphy would not have been possible, but who, as discoverers, had fame and recognition among scientific men capable of understanding their work, yet who have not, perhaps, even now that world-wide reputation, that currency in the mouths of men, which fall to inventors much less than themselves who have probably built their work on the foundations laid for them by others. Yet in my opinion it is the bounden duty of every great place of University education to keep before it not merely the immedately practical needs of technical or other education, but never to permit the ideal of University investigation to be for one moment clouded in their eyes, or to lose interest, or cease to be the object of worthy effort and endeavour. . [1900.]

33. Men of science themselves are not always in a position to give that pecuniary aid necessary to establish the modern laboratory and to equip it with modern appliances; and they are right to call upon all those who take any interest in their subjects to aid them with that pecuniary assistance which in some other countries—many other countries—is extended to them by the Government, but which in this country, rightly or wrongly, by an

almost immemorial tradition has been left chiefly to the energy of private enterprise. . . . I am not going to discuss—it would be almost impertinent of me even to touch upon—the enormous interests bound up with the successful prosecution of these two great branches of research—bacteriology and physiology ; but I may, perhaps, remind you of the enormous practical importance to us, of all people in the world, of some of the more recent researches in bacteriology. Bacteria are a very humble class of organisms, very unjustly abused, as far as I can discover, by ordinary public opinion, in which they suffer, as other classes suffer, by having among them a certain number of black sheep ; but for the most part they are not only innocent, but most useful allies to industry, and almost necessary co-operators in some of those great functions which have to be discharged if the health of great cities is to be maintained. But, apart from that, no doubt our chief interest in them lies in the pathogenic<sup>1</sup> members of the group, and we, of all people in the world, are especially interested in treating of those forms of tropical disease which they have produced, since we are engaged in maintaining a number of our population in countries where the diseases born of these bacteria are the greatest scourges. It is, perhaps, to a distinguished professor of King's College more than to any other man in this country that we owe some of the most useful discoveries in these matters. As the last speaker called attention to Mr. Chamberlain's great work in drawing together the bonds of Empire and knitting in closer unity the various elements that make up that Empire, so I may be permitted, in the wholly different subject with which I have to deal to-night, to remind you that he, as Secretary of the Colonies, has

<sup>1</sup> Disease-producing.

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done his best to encourage these bacteriological investigations of which I, at all events, entertain such great hopes—that science will soon be able to combat, by its discoveries, the inherent difficulties which have hitherto so greatly militated against Europeans in the tropical climates of the world.

[1900.]

34. I am strongly convinced that not only is the necessity of a thorough scientific training great at the present moment, but that the necessity is one which grows with every new discovery. As I have pointed out on previous occasions and to other audiences, there was a time when in reality theoretical scientific knowledge was wholly divorced from manufactures or any form of practical industry. That state of things has long passed away; and now the alliance between the most abstruse scientific investigations and the general manufacturing output of the country is becoming closer and closer. What was yesterday the curiosity of the laboratory will to-morrow be manufactured in the gross and exported from this country, or from other countries, to every quarter of the globe. And no mere surface knowledge, no mere acquaintance with the methods in fashion at a particular moment, can possibly replace that knowledge of principle which lies at the very root of all these discoveries, and which must be possessed by those who are to attain the greatest success, either as the guides and leaders of manufacturing industry or as the inventors who are to increase the sum of human happiness and health by the work of their brains. Therefore, I rejoice whenever I hear that at any institution like this the scientific training is in its kind and in its degree complete and thorough; for it is only complete and thorough scientific training—

one which starts from the great principles of chemistry and physics, and so forth—which can possibly be an adequate foundation of any useful superstructure. [1901.]

35. My point is that mere endowment of Universities will not, I think, add greatly to the output of original work of the first quality.

What, then, will it do? It will do, or may help to do, what is, perhaps, now more important. It will provide an education which will render fit for industrial work all persons who, without University education, would be very ill-equipped indeed. I concur with all the speakers to-day that there is a great need—a great financial need—both in the new and the old Universities for help towards this object. But I would beg to point out that there is even a greater necessity than a well-equipped University—that is, that capitalists should be prepared to realise what we realise in this room—the necessity of giving employment to those whom these Universities are to turn out. . . . One other thing we want, and that, I think, is the creation of positions which will enable a man who has exceptional gifts of originality in science to devote his life to the subjects of his predilection so as not to be driven to another kind of life in which he will not be able to render the full service of which he is capable to his country. In Germany certainly—I am not sure about the United States—such positions exist to a far greater extent than in this country. In the main they must be attached to the Universities. I cannot conceive any more admirable use of any funds which the Universities can command than the increase of the number of such positions—not making them worth the £5000 to £8000 a year which may be desired by the German pro-

fessor referred to by one of the earlier speakers, but positions which may well content one whose ambition is the highest of all ambitions—to add to the knowledge of mankind. . . . . [1904.]

36. There is probably no more serious waste in the world than the waste of brains, of intellect, of originality of scientific imagination, which might be used to further the knowledge of mankind—a knowledge which mankind is ever striving to attain of the history of the world in which it lives, and of its own history as a race—there is no greater waste than that which does not select those capable of carrying out investigations of this sort, and give them the opportunity of doing so.

In my judgment, competitive examinations are literally no test at all of a man's faculty for original research. What you want in original research is something much more and much higher and much rarer than a mere capacity for absorbing knowledge and reproducing it rapidly and effectively at the moment when the competitive examination arrives. What is required is some spark of the divine genius and invention, which shows itself in many ways, but which is, after all, the great element to which we must look for the progress of our race and the improvement of our civilisation. There is no apparatus, no machinery that I know of in existence in these islands, comparable to that which Mr. Carnegie and the Executive Committee have provided under this Trust for carrying out that object. What is it you want to do? You want to catch a man immediately after he has gone through his academic course, before he has become absorbed in professional life, at the moment when ideas spring most easily to the mind, when originality

comes most natural to the happily endowed individual. You want to catch him at that moment, and turn him on to some inquiry which he is really qualified to pursue with success. It is not an easy task to catch your man, and the number of men worth catching, remember, is not very numerous. The report speaks of a certain number of failures among those who have been selected. I was amazed that the number was not much larger. You cannot possibly avoid failures. No intuition would enable you to discover whether a man had something beyond the ambition to do good work in the region of research, or enable you to discover whether he has the capacity to do it. I think the machinery provided by the Executive Committee and the Universities has been marvellously successful in carrying out this great object. . [1909.]

37. Depend upon it, the whole difficulty lies in selecting your men. I suppose you may divide persons competent to do original research roughly into two classes—those who have a gift and an ambition, but not one of those very rare gifts, or one of those overmastering ambitions, which force a man into this particular career through the whole of his life. These men you must catch before they get absorbed in the professional work of teaching, of scientific industries, or whatever it may be, which may very likely most usefully employ the later, and I fear the less inventive, period of human life. You have to catch them in the interval before they get absorbed in these necessary occupations of life, and extract from them all you can in the way of invention and originality. Then there is a rarer and higher class—those who seem born for research, to whom the penetration into the secrets of nature or into the secrets of history is an absorbing

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and overmastering passion, from which they will not be diverted or wrested except by an absolute overmastering necessity of earning their daily bread and supporting themselves and their families. To those men it is all-important, not for the sake of the men, but for the sake of the community, that they should have a chance to devote their rare talents to that great work for which God undoubtedly intended them. . . . [1909.]

## EDUCATION : UNIVERSITY

38. Of course we all admit—everybody admits—that one main end of education is to fit the child, or the boy, or the young man, for the work which he has in life. It is to equip him for what I before described as a struggle for existence. One great authority, a friend of mine, who is a great authority in educational matters, has told us that the Scotch Universities are mainly and primarily professional Universities—Universities I mean which have for their object to fit Scottish youths for the four or five learned professions, such as the Church, medicine, law, and so forth. I admit that duty. I admit that is the first and most necessary work of the University; but we should be taking a very small, a very narrow—I had almost said a very depraved—view of education if we limited it by this, the purely utilitarian consideration.

I would lay before you two other objects, which I think everybody will admit are also, as well as the utilitarian objects, proper ends of education, but which we are, perhaps, too much in the habit, in this practical age of letters, to drop out of our sight—I mean the augmentation of knowledge and the augmentation of enjoyment. I mean the knowledge of the human race. I do not mean the knowledge of the individual. The augmentation of knowledge in this sense, adding to the knowledge which the human race have of the world in which they live, is of course the work of the Universities, and of

Universities alone, among educational establishments. This is not work which obviously ought to be carried out, or attempted to be carried out, by primary or secondary schools, but it is a rule which ought to be carried out by the Universities. No University can be considered in truly healthy spirit unless it carries out that which in certain respects is most imperfectly carried out in England, and rather imperfectly carried out in Scotland. . . . . [1886.]

39. The reference made to one of my brothers<sup>1</sup> cannot but bring home to my mind the fact that he was one of the pioneers, one of the most distinguished representatives of the great extension of that interest in scientific studies characteristic of modern university life. In scientific matters, I humbly watch from afar, but, I can assure you, with an unabated and unbroken interest. The hours that I am able to give to such studies are some of the happiest that I spend. And I always wonder that so many people who boast, and rightly boast, that they have absorbed so much of what is best in modern culture deliberately deprive themselves, by their indifference to or their ignorance of scientific matters, of a pleasure which, if they once experienced, they would never consent to be without. . . . . [1891.]

40. I am perfectly certain that any great centre of academic education which ignored philosophy as an essential branch of its studies would thereby condemn and stultify itself. Industrial work unbalanced by literary work, literary and industrial work unbalanced by speculative work, depend upon it, are unfit to form the mental

<sup>1</sup> F. M. Balfour; an eminent zoologist.

sustenance and substance of academic training. If you mean to minister, not to the material wants, not to the practical improvement alone of the great populations in which your duties are cast, I am sure that you will never forget, what you certainly have not forgotten up to the present time, that we do not live by bread alone, but that literature, and the imagination which literature embodies, and speculation with regard to the world in which we live, in which our lot is cast, have always been, and must always be so long as the world exists, the main subject of interest to educated men; and it is because I think a University like this will raise the ideal of human life and of human study in one of the busiest, in one of the most intelligent, and in one of the most important sections of our great English community that I and others are looking to the progress you annually make in your great work with the greatest interest and with the greatest satisfaction. . . . . [1891.]

41. But I think there is another point of view, and an even higher point of view from which these athletic exercises may be recommended to your favourable attention. For what does a University exist? It exists largely, no doubt, to foster that disinterested love of knowledge, which is one of the highest of all gifts. It exists, no doubt, to give that professional training which is an absolute necessity in any modern civilised community. These great objects may no doubt be carried out without any elaborate equipment for athletic exercises, but I do not think that the duties of a modern University end there. A University, if I may speak from my own experience, and say what I believe to be the universal experience of all who have had the advantage of a Uni-

versity training—a University gives a man all through his life the sense that he belongs to a great community in which he spent his youth, which indeed he has left, but to which he still belongs, whose members are not merely the students congregated for the time being within the walls where they are pursuing their intellectual training, but are scattered throughout the world; but, though scattered, have never lost the sense that they still belong to the great University which gave them their education. That feeling—not the least valuable possession which a man carries away with him from a University life—that feeling may be fostered—is fostered, no doubt, by a community of education—by attending the same lectures, by passing the same examinations; but no influence fosters it more surely and more effectually than that feeling of common life which the modern athletic sports, as they have been developed in modern places of learning, give to all those who take an interest in such matters, whether as performers or as spectators.

[1896.]

42. I believe that the educational value of a worthy setting of a great University is not to be despised. Traditions cling round our buildings. They become part and parcel, as it were, of the fabric in which the studies take place. They are intimately associated with the recollections of the students after they have left the place of their education. They form part of that most valuable result of academic training—the love with which those who have been academically trained look back to the freshest, the brightest, and the most plastic period of their lives. . . . If history teaches us anything about the conditions of University life, it is that a University, once

founded, is possessed of a wonderful, persistent vitality. Political revolutions, military revolutions, theological revolutions pass over it, and leave it still what it was before—a great centre of enlightenment, a great source of knowledge and of education. Universities have not survived those revolutions only, but they have even, though sometimes with difficulty, shown themselves capable of rapidly modifying themselves to suit the advance in knowledge. This danger, and all other dangers, have been survived by almost every one of the old Universities of Europe, and I think we may, therefore, without undue confidence anticipate that the University of Edinburgh will for many ages to come be all it has been in the past to Edinburgh, to Scotland, and to the world. . . . . [1897.]

43. The time is not very far back when the idea was prevalent that, after all, a University was little more than an examination machine—a machine for stamping a certain number of students with a hall-mark indicating that they had satisfied a certain number of examiners, that they possessed a certain amount of knowledge in a certain number of subjects. And I am not sure that a distinguished Edinburgh student and a distinguished politician, Lord Brougham, mentioned by Lord Rosebery in his speech, was not as responsible for that idea (which I think is profoundly a mistaken idea) as any other person who has dealt largely with matters of education. But that idea, after all, belongs to the past, and everybody who realises how the University machinery may do the work of higher education in the country has long recognised that a University to be at its best must not be an examining University, merely or principally—that, indeed, it might

not be an examining University at all,—but that what is wanted is for it to be a teaching University. . [1898.]

44. The value of a University for educational purposes lies not principally in its examination, not even wholly in its teaching, however admirable that teaching may be: it lies, and must lie, in the collision of minds between student and student. We learn at all times of life, but perhaps most when we are young, as much from our contemporaries as from anybody else, and when we are young we learn from our contemporaries that which no professor, however eminent, can teach us. Therefore it is that while I admire the lives—admirable beyond any power of mine to express my admiration—the lives of those solitary students who, under great difficulties, come up to Edinburgh or some other University, and without intercourse with their fellows, doggedly and perseveringly pursue their studies—very often under most serious pressure of home difficulties—their course, however admirable, is not the course which can give them to the fullest those great advantages which are possessed by those whose lot is more happily cast than theirs. . . . . [1898.]

45. What I say of these athletic associations, of those athletic pursuits, I say with even greater confidence of such societies as those who in their collective capacity have just elected Lord Rosebery their chairman; for those societies, after all, have not only all the advantages which I have just enumerated as regards the athletic societies, but they are deliberately founded upon an intellectual basis. They give an opportunity such as nothing else can give for that interchange of ideas between men at the age when new ideas come in with an almost overwhelming

rush, when the mind is fresh for new impressions, when new theories, some of them perhaps very absurd, new schemes, new views, all crowd upon the intellectual view and come forward to be judged and weighed by those youthful judges. That discussion of such matters between equals on equal terms is of as much value, I believe, to the students of a University as the most learned discourses of the most learned teachers; and it is because I hold that view, strongly and earnestly, and because I think associations are specially required in a University framed on the lines of our Scottish Universities, that I rejoice to think that, as this meeting shows, the Associated Societies never were in a more flourishing condition than they are now. . . . . [1898.]

46. I hope that in the Universities of the future every great teacher will attract to himself from other Universities students who may catch his spirit—young men who may be guided by him in the paths of scientific fame; men who may come to him from north or from south; and who, whether they come from the narrow bounds of this island or from the furthest verge of the Empire, may feel that they have always open to them the best that the Empire can afford, and that within the Empire they can find some man of original genius and great teaching gifts who may spread the light of knowledge and further the cause of research. I have said that they were to find this—I have suggested, at all events, that they should find this—within the limits of the Empire. I hope that in putting it that way I have not spoken any treason against the universality of learning or the cosmopolitan character of science. I quite agree that the discoveries made in one University or by one

investigator are at once the common property of the world; and we all rejoice that it is so. No jealous tariffs stand between the free communication of ideas. And surely we may be happy that that is the fact. And yet, though knowledge is cosmopolitan, though science knows no country and is moved by no passion—not even the noblest passion of patriotism—still I do think that in the methods and machinery of imparting knowledge, as there always has been in modern times, so there may still continue to be some national differentiation in the character of our Universities, something in our great centres of knowledge which reflects the national character and suits the individual feeling; and that an English-speaking student and a citizen of the Empire, from whatever part of the world he may hail, ought to find something equally suited to him as a student, and more congenial to him as a man, in some University within the ample bounds of the Empire. . . . . [1903.]

47. Perhaps there are some who may be disposed to say "Where is now the austere severity which used to characterise our Scottish Universities?" Are we and our students going to sink into a Sybaritic luxury? Do we, indeed, require that for the needs of the flesh there should be this costly expenditure both of money and of organising effort? If there are critics who are disposed to take that attitude, in my judgment they take but a very superficial view of the real function which a Union such as that which has long flourished in this University, and is now going to flourish with ever-increasing utility in the future—they take, I say, a narrow view of the uses, the purposes, and the benefits which such an institution as that is calculated to confer. You cannot estimate

the value in academic life of such an institution as the Union merely by counting up the number of luncheons, the reading-room accommodation, and so forth, and by saying so much material comfort, even luxury, has been added to the life of the University students. We must look deeper than that ; and for my own part there is nothing of which I am more clearly convinced than that no University can be described as properly equipped which merely consists of an adequate professoriate, adequate lecture-rooms, and adequate scientific apparatus, which only satisfy the needs, exacting though they are, of modern education. Something more than that is required if that University is to do all that it is capable of doing for the education of the young men of this country ; and that something is provided by the Union. I know, speaking from my own experience—now rather an old experience—it is our contemporaries who make our most useful critics ; it is even our contemporaries who make our most instructive teachers ; and a University life which consists only of the relation between the teachers and the taught, between Professors and students, is but half a University life. The other half consists of the intercourse between the students themselves, the day-to-day common life, the day-to-day interchange of ideas, of friendships, of commentary upon men and things, and of the great problems which the opening world naturally suggests to the young—the University which is deficient in that is, I say, half a University, and no mere scholastic equipment can satisfy the void which is thus left. That void is amply, indeed splendidly, filled by the institution whose new birth, or whose great increase at all events, we are here to celebrate. . . . . [1906.]

48. Let us rejoice in common that there is one branch of University work, of growing interest and importance, daily receiving more recognition from all that is best in the intellectual life of the country—I mean the post-graduate course. There the slavery of examinations is a thing of the past; the intellectual servitude in which the pupil has hitherto been is a thing he may put on one side; and he is in the happy position of being able to interrogate nature and to study history with the view of carrying out his own line of investigations and research, instead of being in a perpetual subservience to the idea whether such-and-such a subject is worth getting up for examination purposes, whether he may not have omitted to read with sufficient attention something which to him is perfectly useless, perfectly barren, perfectly uninteresting, but on which some question may be asked by a too curious examiner. He is in the position of having his teacher as his fellow-worker, of having a man at whose feet he has come to sit. . . . That is the proper position from which the most advantage can be extracted from the concentration of intellectual life at one of our great Universities, and it is the post-graduate course which I hope to see rapidly and effectively developed in all the Universities of this country and of the Colonies.

And let me observe that it is in connection with the post-graduate course that there can be a kind of co-operation between us and the more distant parts of the Empire, which is impossible with regard to the earlier and lower stages of University culture. In the primary and secondary schools of a country evidently only the children or young men of the district within reach can attend; and no co-operation with other countries or with the Colonies is possible except after mutual consultation,

after consideration of the problems common to education in all parts of the world, after exchange of information which I hope will be one of the outcomes of this conference. But when you leave the lower stages of education, and when you come to the post-graduate course, you get an intercommunication between different parts of the Empire which is closer and which may be more fruitful; for it is not merely the communication of ideas, it is not merely a central bureau of information, invaluable as I believe such a bureau would be, it is the actual interchange of students. If we can so arrange the post-graduate course of our Universities that it will be thought a normal and natural thing for any man who has the talent and the time to devote his life to investigation, first, to get his education at one of the Universities of his own country, and then to go and conclude that education in a post-graduate course in one of our Colonies, how great will be the advantage, not merely to the student, but to the communities which will be brought together by a tie which may unite us all in a common interest in these higher subjects.

I therefore think that, though at first sight the subject of examinations and the allied subject of University training free from examinations may seem somewhat alien to the topic of a closer communication between Great Britain and other parts of the Empire in the matter of education, they are, in fact, closely allied—they are topics which naturally lead one into the other. And I earnestly hope that one of the outcomes of this conference, and certainly the outcome in which I take the greatest interest, will be such a development in the post-graduate system, and such a mutual arrangement between the Universities in all parts of the Empire, as shall not only

stimulate post-graduate research, but shall enable and encourage that research being carried on in different parts of the Empire by members travelling from one part of the Empire to the other, and thus bringing home to us even more than it is brought home already the close community of interest, not only in things material, but in things of the highest intellect and research, which should bind together the citizens of a common Empire. [1907.]

49. I believe the great advancement of mankind is to be looked for in our increasing command, our ever-increasing command, over the secrets of nature: secrets, however, which are not to be unlocked by the man who merely tries to obtain them for purposes of purely material ends, but secrets which are opened in their fullness only to him who pursues them in a disinterested spirit. Literature we can never do without. The classification of all that has been produced by the human mind in the past in the way of great imaginative literary work is a possession to which we all agree we must cling with a tenacity which nothing will unloose. But you can be perfectly stationary in society, however highly you are cultivated; and I believe that the motive power, the power which is really going to change the external circumstances of civilisation, which is going to add to the well-being of mankind, and, let me add, which is going to stimulate the imagination of all those who are interested in the Universities in which our lot is cast, that lies, after all, in science. I would rather be known as having added something to our knowledge of truth and nature than anything else I can imagine. Such fame, unfortunately, is not mine. My opportunities lie in a different direction; but the happiest of men surely are those to whom fortune

has given time, leisure, and opportunity, and above all a genius, which enables them to penetrate into the secrets of nature in such a way, that, perhaps, unknown to themselves, unknown even to the generation in which they are born, something will have been given to mankind which posterity can develop into a great practical discovery on which the felicity of millions may depend. . . [1908.]

50. After all, how much of the value of University education consists in the memories of those who have enjoyed it and the places where they enjoyed it. How invaluable it is to link those memories with the scenes of great architecture, beautiful surroundings, and the subtle influences which inspire youth at its most impressionable age, and which remain imprinted upon the memory of the young to their dying day and make it part of their very being. . . . . . . . . . [1911.]

51. Let us see that we are as magnificent in our ideas of education as the architect of these buildings has been in planning this exterior edifice in which it is to be carried on. There are those who quite rightly attach great value, supreme value if you will, to the fact that within the walls of the University there may be given to the youth of the country opportunity which would otherwise go unused, and talents elicited which would otherwise lie fallow. Do not let us narrow down our ideas of University education to the possibility of a certain number of intelligent youths passing a certain number of difficult examinations. That is good, that is necessary; but that is not all, nor is it nearly all, that a great University should have in view. I myself hold the view that in the question of education, apart from the

mere examinations, the youths educate each other almost as effectively, and in some respects more effectively, than the education they receive from the Professors, and each one of us who has had the good fortune to be a member of a University, when he looks back upon his collegiate career, must realise that what education he received in the lecture-rooms does not always suffice.

Beyond the function of educating the youth there is, in my judgment, another function not less important which every University should aim at, and which, unless it aims at, it will not accomplish,—the function on which I have already dwelt—that higher function of making men feel themselves the custodians of all that is highest in our civilisation, all that most especially requires to be preserved, cherished, cultivated, not least perhaps because we live in a democratic age. . . . [1911.]

52. The Conference this afternoon differs in one important respect from any of the others which have been held or it is proposed to hold. The difference consists in this—that this afternoon, at all events in the earlier part of our proceedings, we are dealing with a problem not common to all the fifty-three universities represented at this great Imperial Conference. We are dealing with only one group of problems connected with one group of universities: I mean those universities which have their seat in the East, and were intended to minister to the wants of our Eastern fellow-countrymen. The nature of the difficulty with which it is proposed to deal this afternoon, would, I think, be apparent to anyone who puts aside our current form of speech, and remembers, what every one of us knows, that education is something much more than intellectual training, is more than a mere

acquisition of a certain amount of knowledge in a form either useful to the conduct of life or useful to the passing of examinations. All of us know, of course—it is mere commonplace, though sometimes forgotten—that education deals not merely with the imparting of knowledge on the one side or the acquisition of knowledge on the other, but also with the training of the whole man. We are allowed to forget this with comparative impunity in Western universities, because, in fact, the general training of the young is only in part carried out by the official teacher. All of us who have been either at school or the university know well enough that whatever might have been done for us in those two forms of education no insignificant part—I would say the more important part—of our training was due to the collision of minds between the boys at school or between the undergraduates at the university.

We do not have it brought home to us here with the same insistence as it is brought home to teachers in Oriental Universities, that there is and must be a collision, not an irreconcilable collision, between the growth of scientific knowledge in all its branches and the traditions, beliefs, and customs, which, after all, are the great moulding forces of social man. In the West the changes of knowledge and the changes of traditions have gone on by relatively small degrees. There has been in every case mutual adjustment, and although nobody can be unconscious of the difficulties of Western teaching, due to the necessity of keeping up that adjustment, nobody is likely to underrate those difficulties in the East. Our difficulties were incomparably smaller, hardly to be mentioned with those which necessarily come upon us when you bring in, upon a society unprepared by the long training

we have gone through generation after generation, the full stress and weight of modern scientific, critical, and industrial knowledge. I do not think anybody, whatever his views on education at large, or the function which spiritual ideals and ancient customs have upon training, is likely to underrate the violence of the effect which this sudden contrast must produce upon an ancient and civilised community. This modern knowledge, remember, is not a thing that can be ignored or neglected by the East if it comes to them with all the enormous prestige which naturally results from great material success. Scientific knowledge, and growing conception of the nature and character of the world in which we live, is no mere speculation: it does not come armed with the prestige proper to mere speculation; it comes armed with that perhaps more vulgar, more impressive, prestige, due to the fact that from it have been born so many of the arts of life, so many of the things that have made races powerful, wealthy, and prosperous. How, then, are you going to diminish the shock which this sudden invasion of a wholly alien learning must have upon the cultured society of the East? A catastrophic change in the environment of an organism is apt to inflict great injury upon the organism—even, perhaps, to destroy it altogether. We all know, on the other hand, that if time be given to the organism, if the change, however great, be gradual, if the organism be given the opportunity of making its own changes in correspondence with that changed environment, there is no reason why it should not flourish as greatly in the new as in the old surroundings. There we are, forced to be catastrophic. It is impossible to graft by a gradual process in the East what we have got to by a gradual process, but which, having been matured in the West, is suddenly

carried, full-fledged, unchanged, and planted down, as it were, in those new surroundings.

I have presented the problem to you as it presents itself to me. I do not pretend to suggest a solution. The Papers may not cover the whole ground, but they will, at all events, suggest certain methods of mitigating the dangers and difficulties inevitably incident to what in the main will, I hope, prove to be a great and beneficent revolution, but which, in its inception and some of its incidental characteristics, is not without danger to some of the best and higher interests of the great Oriental race with which we are attempting to deal this afternoon. . . . . [1912.]

## EDUCATION : EXAMINATIONS

53. ONE other form of enjoyment there is which must necessarily be the portion of a comparatively small—not a very small—portion of those to whom the benefits of the educational system are extended. I mean the disinterested enjoyment of the acquisition of knowledge. In order that this enjoyment may be obtained at its best, let us watch with the most jealous care any encroachment of the system of competitive examination upon our educational life. It is not grateful perhaps in a Minister of the Crown to speak disrespectfully of competitive examination, which relieves me of so much of the intolerable burden of patronage, but though as a Minister of the Crown I am very grateful to competitive examinations, I consider them an abomination educationally, and if in some respects a necessary one, we must keep them within the very smallest possible limits. For recollect, competitive examinations injure not merely the pupil, they injure the teacher. The man who has to teach the class for competitive examinations is no longer able to teach a subject as the subject presents itself to him, but has to teach it as he thinks the subject will present itself to the examiner; and the injury to the pupil is especially bad, because those who suffer most are the ablest pupils. It is the one who is going to succeed, and who does succeed, in the competitive examinations who suffers most from the effects produced by the examination. His whole idea

of learning is lowered. Its dignity vanishes. The whole bloom and the whole charm are rudely brushed away from knowledge. He looks on learning no longer as the greatest delight and honour in his life, but looks at it as the means by which he may earn marks; and love is not more ruined by being associated with avarice than is learning by being associated with mark-getting.

[1886.]

54. The habit of always requiring some reward for knowledge beyond the knowledge itself, be that reward some material prize or be it what is vaguely called self-improvement, is one with which I confess I have little sympathy, fostered though it is by the whole scheme of our modern education. Do not suppose that I desire the impossible. I would not if I could destroy the examination system. But there are times, I confess, when I feel tempted somewhat to vary the prayer of the poet,<sup>1</sup> and to ask whether Heaven has not reserved in pity to this much educating generation some peaceful desert of literature as yet unclaimed by the crammer or the coach, where it might be possible for the student to wander, even perhaps to stray, at his own pleasure, without finding every beauty labelled, every difficulty engineered, every nook surveyed, and a professional cicerone standing at every corner to guide each succeeding traveller along the same well-worn round. If such a wish were granted I would further ask that the domain of knowledge thus "neutralised" should be the literature of our own country. I grant to the full that the systematic study of *some* litera-

<sup>1</sup> In view of the context, the Editor must be excused from giving the reference, and certainly in doing so he would only be "troubling what is clear."

ture must be a principal element in the education of youth. But why should that literature be our own? Why should we brush off the bloom and freshness from the works to which Englishmen and Scotchmen most naturally turn for refreshment, namely, those written in their own language? Why should we associate them with the memory of hours spent in weary study; in the effort to remember for purposes of examination what no human being would wish to remember for any other; in the struggle to learn something, not because the learner desires to know it, but because he desires some one else to know that he knows it? This is the dark side of the examination system—a system necessary and therefore excellent, but one which does, through the very efficiency and thoroughness of the drill by which it imparts knowledge, to some extent impair the most delicate pleasures by which the acquisition of knowledge should be attended. . . . . [1887.]

55. I do not wish to overstate the case against examinations. I dislike them so heartily that I am always in danger of doing so—a danger I endeavour to guard myself against. I admit them to be necessities, but though they are necessary, they are in my opinion necessary evils—evils which, by no possibility, by no skill on the part of examiners, by no dexterity on the part of those responsible for University organisation, can be wholly removed. The man whose whole reading or whole University life is directed towards reading for an examination is, in theological language, under the law, and not under grace. That an examination may be a good test of intellectual eminence I cannot deny, when I remember the number of men who in after life

have been in the very first rank of scientific and philosophical investigators, or in the very front rank of men of letters, and who have also distinguished themselves in examinations. But while they were reading for examinations I maintain that their minds were in a thoroughly unnatural and artificial condition. They are occupied in considering not what is the road to truth, not what is the best method of advancing the special study in which they are engaged, not even how they may best educate their own faculties so as in their turn to advance the torch of knowledge and increase the science of the world. Not at all. They are occupied in amassing a large amount no doubt of accurate knowledge on an immense variety of subjects, keeping it altogether in their head at the same time, ready for immediate use—the last thing a practical man ever does if he can avoid it. The wise man puts out of his head that which is not necessary for his immediate purpose. He focuses his mind on the work immediately before him, and though no doubt he may see to the right or to the left those collateral subjects which have a bearing on the main question which interests him, he certainly is never in the condition of that unhappy victim of examinations, who is going over in his head before entering the fatal room all the various points in different problems which it is necessary to have at his finger-ends if he is to satisfy the gentlemen who are examining him.

[1898.]

56. I believe it is largely due, not to the maleficent influence of any Government department or any municipality, but to the inherent ignorance of public opinion, that we have got to overrate, in the preposterous manner in

which we do overrate, the value and importance of competition, of examinations, in our Universities. I think the President of King's College made a brief reference to that evil, and I am quite sure it is an evil which cannot be overrated. I do not mean to say that you can dispense with examinations. I venture on no such dogmatic utterance; but I do think it of importance that we should have present to our minds the inevitable evils which examinations carry in their train, or the system of competitive examinations as it has been developed of recent years in our great Universities. The truth is that a book which is read for examination purposes is a book which has been read wrongly. Every student ought to read a book, not to answer the questions of somebody else, but to answer his own questions. The modern plan, under which it would almost seem as if the highest work of our Universities consisted in a perennial contest between the examiner on the one side, and the coach on the other, over the passive body of the examinee, is really a dereliction and a falling away from all that is highest in the idea of study and investigation. I do not know how far these evils can be eliminated from our system so far as the pre-graduate course is concerned. I have to leave the solution of that problem to those who are directly responsible for the government of our Universities.

[1907.]

experience in such matters themselves, let them examine the experiences of their acquaintance. They will find, if I mistake not, that by whatever means conformity to a particular pattern may have been brought about, those who conform are not, as a rule, conscious of coercion by an external and arbitrary authority. They do not act under penalty ; they yield no unwilling obedience. On the contrary, their admiration for a "well-dressed person," *quod* well-dressed, is at least as genuine an æsthetic approval as any they are in the habit of expressing for other forms of beauty ; just as their objection to an out-worn fashion is based on a perfectly genuine æsthetic dislike. They are repelled by the unaccustomed sight, as a reader of discrimination is repelled by turgidity or false pathos. It appears to them ugly, even grotesque, and they turn from it with an aversion as disinterested, as unperturbed by personal or "society" considerations, as if they were critics contemplating the production of some pretender in the region of Great Art.

In truth this tendency in matters æsthetic is only a particular case of a general tendency to agreement which plays an even more important part in other departments of human activity. Its operation, beneficent doubtless on the whole, may be traced through all social and political life. We owe to it in part that deep-lying likeness in tastes, in opinions, and in habits, without which cohesion among the individual units of a community would be impossible, and which constitutes the unmoved platform on which we fight out our political battles. It is no contemptible factor among the forces by which nations are created and religions disseminated and maintained. It is the very breath of life to sects and coteries. Sometimes, no doubt, its results are ludicrous. Some-

times they are unfortunate. Sometimes merely insignificant. Under which of these heads we should class our ever-changing uniformity in dress I will not take upon me to determine. It is sufficient for my present purpose to point out that the æsthetic likings which fashion originates, however trivial, are perfectly genuine; and that to an origin similar in kind, however different in dignity and permanence, should be traced much of the characteristic quality which gives its special flavour to the higher artistic sentiments of each successive generation.

It is, of course, true that this "tendency to agreement," this principle of drill, cannot itself determine the objects in respect of which the agreement is to take place. It can do much to make every member of a particular "public" like the same bonnet, or the same epic, at the same time; but it cannot determine what that bonnet or that epic is to be. A fashion, as the phrase goes, has to be "set," and the persons who set it manifestly do not follow it. What, then, do they follow? We note the influences that move the flock. What moves the bellwether? . . . . . [1895.]

## GENIUS, AND THE PRODUCTION OF GENIUSES

58. THE truth is that to every genius there is a characteristic weakness, a defect to which it naturally leans, and into which, in those inevitable moments when inspiration flags, it is apt to subside . . . . [1887.]

59. The development of genius, as of everything else, depends as much upon what it is now the fashion to call "environment" as upon its innate capabilities. [1887.]

60. It is true, of course, that the influence of "the environment" in moulding, developing, and stimulating genius within the limits of its original capacity is very great, and may seem, especially in the humbler walks of artistic production, to be all-powerful. But innate and original genius is not the creation of any age. It is a biological accident, the incalculable product of two sets of ancestral tendencies; and what the age does to these biological accidents is not to create them, but to choose from them, to encourage those which are in harmony with its spirit, to crush out and to sterilise the rest. Its action is analogous to that which a plot of ground exercises on the seeds which fall upon it. Some thrive, some languish, some die; and the resulting vegetation is sharply characterised, not because few kinds of seeds have there sown themselves, but because few kinds have been allowed

to grow up. Without pushing the parallel too far, it may yet serve to illustrate the truth that, as a stained window derives its character and significance from the absorption of a large portion of the rays which endeavour to pass through it, so an age is what it is, not only by reason of what it fosters, but as much, perhaps, by reason of what it destroys. We may conceive, then, that from the total but wholly unknown number of men of productive capacity born in any generation, those whose gifts are in harmony with the tastes of their contemporaries will produce their best; those whose gifts are wholly out of harmony will be extinguished, or, which is very nearly the same thing, will produce only for the benefit of the critics in succeeding generations; while those who occupy an intermediate position will, indeed, produce, but their powers will, consciously or unconsciously, be warped and thwarted, and their creations fall short of what, under happier circumstances, they might have been able to achieve. . . . [1895.]

61. Is a due succession of men above the average in original capacity necessary to maintain social progress?

If so, can we discover any law according to which such men are produced?

I entertain no doubt myself that the answer to the first question should be in the affirmative. Democracy is an excellent thing; but, though quite consistent with progress, it is not progressive *per se*. Its value is regulative, not dynamic; and if it meant (as it never does) substantial uniformity, instead of legal equality, we should become fossilised at once. Movement may be controlled or checked by the many; it is initiated and made effective by the few. If (for the sake of illustration) we suppose

mental capacity in all its many forms to be measurable and commensurable, and then imagine two societies possessing the same average capacity—but an average made up in one case of equal units, in the other of a majority slightly below the average and a minority much above it, few could doubt that the second, not the first, would show the greatest aptitude for movement. It might go wrong, but it would go.

The second question—how is this originality (in its higher manifestations called genius) effectively produced—is not so simple.

Excluding education in its narrowest sense—which few would regard as having much to do with the matter—the only alternatives seem to be the following :—

Original capacity may be no more than one of the ordinary variations incidental to heredity. A community may breed a minority thus exceptionally gifted, as it breeds a minority of men over six feet six. There may be an average decennial output of congenital geniuses as there is an average decennial output of congenital idiots—though the number is likely to be smaller.

But if this be the sole cause of the phenomenon, why does the same race *apparently* produce many men of genius in one generation and a few in another? Why are years of abundance so often followed by long periods of sterility?

The most obvious explanation of this would seem to be that in some periods circumstances give many openings to genius, in some periods few. The genius is constantly produced; but it is only occasionally recognised.

In this there must be some truth. A mob orator in Turkey, a religious reformer in seventeenth-century Spain, a military leader in the Sandwich Islands, would hardly get their chance. Yet the theory of opportunity

can scarcely be reckoned a complete explanation. For it leaves unaccounted for the *variety* of genius which has in some countries marked epochs of vigorous national development. Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries, Florence in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Holland in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, are the typical examples. In such periods the opportunities of statesmen, soldiers, orators, and diplomats, may have been specially frequent. But whence came the poets, the sculptors, the painters, the philosophers, and the men of letters? What peculiar opportunities had *they*?

The only explanation, if we reject the idea of a mere coincidence, seems to be that, quite apart from opportunity, the exceptional stir and fervour of national life evokes, or may evoke, qualities which in ordinary times lie dormant, unknown even to their possessors. The potential Miltons are "mute" and "inglorious" not because they cannot find a publisher, but because they have nothing they want to publish. They lack the kind of inspiration which, on this view, flows from social surroundings where great things, though of quite another kind, are being done and thought.

If this theory be true (and it is not without its difficulties), one would like to know whether these undoubted outbursts of originality in the higher and rarer form of genius are symptomatic of a general rise in the number of persons exhibiting original capacity of a more ordinary type. If so, then the conclusion would seem to be that some kind of widespread exhilaration or excitement is required in order to enable any community to extract the best results from the raw material transmitted to it by natural inheritance. . . . [1908.]

## LITERATURE

62. LITERATURE is more universal than any other form of human activity, because in one sense it includes them all. Literature is art, but it is not art alone ; it is also science, and it is also learning ; and therefore the number of those to whom literature appeals is necessarily greater than those who are appealed to either by painting, or by music, or by architecture, or by any one of those arts that are more strictly and properly designated as fine arts. Further, it has always appeared to me that it is more in our power to render literature accessible to the general community than it is in our power to render any fine art accessible to the masses of our countrymen.

[1889.]

63. I suppose, if we were concerned to distinguish the orator from the man of letters, we should say that an orator was a man whose public utterances depended not upon himself alone but upon the action and reaction between himself and the audience which he was addressing. We should say that he was a man who by himself was little, but in relation to his audience was much—who gave them much and who received much from them. Oratory, as so defined, has many great advantages, but it has some great defects. The orator is too apt to depend upon adventitious aids to the arguments which he is advancing. He is too apt to depend at last upon

exaggeration, upon epigram, upon invective, upon personal attack, upon all the arts and devices—I use these words in no depreciatory sense—familiar from all time to those who have taken part in public affairs by debate. From these defects Lord Derby<sup>1</sup> was conspicuously free. He never depended for the effect which he produced either upon a personal attack, or upon turning an opponent into ridicule, or upon exaggerating his own case, or upon unduly belittling the case of his opponent. He had the incomparable, the almost unique art of making good an argument in a speech without any of those adventitious aids, and at the same time of making it interesting to every man who heard him, or who read the speech, and of making it convincing to every man who was prepared to study it with an open mind. Those who have never tried to do this may think it an easy task. If anybody does think it an easy task, let him try to do it, and I will guarantee that he will change his opinion. It does appear to me that in these days, when the orator, as I have defined him, is having a good time, when a speaker of the temper and character of Lord Derby is rare, and even impossible now—it does appear to me that our loss is very difficult to overestimate. We are constantly told that we live in a democratic age; and undoubtedly we do. At all events, we live in an age of—I was going to say government by debate, but that would be perhaps too great a compliment to pay to it—an age of government by rhetoric.

It is an unfortunate fact that a democracy, which perhaps more than any other requires the cold and aloof reasoning of a statesman like Lord Derby, should have

<sup>1</sup> 1799-1869. Prime Minister (Conservative), 1852, 1858-9, and 1866-8.

such a passion for the less dry light which is so abundantly provided by the modern machinery of electioneering. I have been informed—I am glad to say that I have no personal experience of the matter—that patients suffering from the gout have a peculiar appetite for those particular dishes which most minister to the fostering of their especial disease. So it appears to me to be the case of the British public at the present time. What they want is reasoning; what they love is rhetoric. Therefore it is that, apart from all personal considerations, and apart from all considerations connected with this society, I think that this is a fitting opportunity to express my own individual regret, and I believe your regret also, at the loss of a great man who had the unique art of making reasoning as attractive to the masses as rhetoric could possibly be. I feel tempted to say that in my judgment the course of events, and the future we have to look forward to, make that loss even more grievous than it would otherwise be.

But I fear that on the present occasion I have dealt too long with this special topic. My business is rather to talk to you not of the political future of the country, but of matters connected with literature—of matters, in other words, which those who belong to this society may be supposed to take an especial interest in, and have especially under their charge. I do not know that I have anything to say which may interest you on this topic. We have all felt that the great names which rendered illustrious the early years of the great Victorian epoch are one by one dropping away, and now perhaps but few are left. I do not know that any of us can see around us the men springing up who are to occupy the thrones thus left vacant. I should not venture to

say—and indeed I do not think—that we live in an age barren of literature. But none of us will deny that at all events at the present moment we do not see a rising generation of men of letters likely to rival those of old times. I was born, I suppose, too late to join in the full enthusiasm which I have known expressed for the writers whose best works were produced before 1860 or 1870. Personally I have known many who found in the writings of—whom shall I say?—Carlyle, Tennyson, Browning, and George Eliot everything that they could imagine or desire, either in the way of artistic excellence, or ethical instruction, or literary delight. I have not myself ever been able to surrender myself so absolutely to the charm and the greatness of these great and charming writers. I have sometimes thought that the age of which I speak may perhaps have been inclined unduly to exalt itself in comparison with that despised century, the eighteenth. Whoever may be right or wrong in these matters, at all events the fact remains that the authors to whom I have alluded would have rendered any reign illustrious; that they have departed; and that we do not at present see among us their successors.

It is a most interesting situation, because I am not prepared to admit that we live in an age which bears upon it the marks of decadence. Undoubtedly there is more knowledge of literature, more command of literary technique, both in prose and in poetry, at the present moment, than has been often the case, or perhaps ever the case before. You will find a true literary instinct pervading the whole enormous and even overwhelming mass of contemporary literature. Therefore it certainly is not from ignorance nor indifference that the present

age fails, if, indeed, I am right in thinking that it does fail. Neither has the present age another mark which has been characteristic of previous ages of decadence. There have been periods when the love of literature was very widely spread through the community, when a knowledge of literature and a command of literary forms was prevalent among the educated classes ; but when, at the same time, the admiration of past works of genius was so overwhelming that it seemed almost impossible to bring forth new works of genius in competition with them. The old forms, in fact, commanded and mastered whatever imaginative and original genius there may have been at the time of which I am speaking. I do not believe that that is the case now. My own conviction is that at this moment, not only is there no dislike of novelty, not only is there no prejudice in favour of ancient models, but any new thing of any merit whatever is likely to be accepted and welcomed at least at its true value.

I recollect an artist friend of mine, who had studied for some time in the cosmopolitan studios of Paris, saying that in his opinion we were on the very verge of a great artistic revival. He said that he found among the students with whom he associated such a zeal for art and such a knowledge of art, so great a desire to bring forth some new thing which should be worthy of the everlasting admiration of mankind, that in his judgment it was absolutely impossible that so much talent, so much zeal, and so much readiness to accept new ideas should not ultimately issue in the formation of a great and original school of painting. What he said of painting we may surely say at the present day of literature. It only requires the rise of some great man of genius to mould

the forces which exist in plenty around us, to utilise the instruction which we have almost in superabundance, and to make the coming age of literature as glorious or even more glorious than any of those which have preceded it. Whether that genius will arise or not I cannot say. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and no man knoweth whence it cometh or whither it goeth." So it is with genius; and no man can prophesy what is to be the literary future of the world. My friend Lord Kelvin has often talked to me of the future of science, and he has said words to me about the future of science which are parallel to the words I have quoted to you about the future of art and with the hope which I have expressed to you with respect to literature. He has told me that to the men of science of to-day it appears as if we were trembling upon the brink of some great scientific discovery which should give to us a new view of the great forces of nature among which, and in the midst of which, we move. If this prophecy be right, and if the other forecasts to which I have alluded be right, then indeed it is true that we live in an interesting age; then indeed it is true that we may look forward to a time full of fruit for the human race—to an age which cannot be sterilised, or rendered barren, even by politics. . . . [1893.]

64. After all, though the provinces of literature are many, the kingdom of literature is one. However diverse be the fields in which men of letters work, they are all conscious of belonging to one community and of furthering one cause. I do not wish to press too far the merits of literature. I do not pretend that literature necessarily softens the manners. I do not pretend that literature carries with it all the cardinal virtues in its train, or that

the Ten Commandments are likely to be specially observed in a community of literary instincts and literary tastes. I think much harm has been done by pretending that literature can do that which literature itself cannot do, and which, if it is to be done at all, must be done by other and far different forces. But, without pretending that literature can do that which experience shows it cannot do, and has not done, still it is, after all, one of the greatest engines—the greatest engine—for the production of cultivated happiness. It has produced, and is daily and hourly producing, more innocent and refined pleasure in every class, from the richest to the poorest, in every country where education is known, than any other source of pleasure whatever. All those who, even in the smallest degree, have given themselves up to the fascinations of literary life would change the satisfaction that they derived from it for no other that could be provided for them. And whatever else the spread of education may do, at all events this it ought to do—it ought to put these pleasures ever, day by day, within the reach of a larger circle, within the grasp of a greater number of our fellow-creatures. . . . [1897.]

65. I have no doubt that these poems were admirable literary specimens of what the living Welsh tongue can do. It is, alas, the tragedy of all art which is embodied in language. The value of these artistic performances never can be fully appreciated outside the circle, wide or narrow, of those who have from their birth had an intimate acquaintance with the tongue in which these works of art are embodied. Nothing will get over it. It is part of the laws of Nature. Translation may give you the substance, but never can give you the real artistic

soul of any composition, for that depends ultimately and essentially upon style, and style is incapable of translation. It is a sad thought to me how much of the great literary genius of the world has through the operation of this law been inevitably confined to the too narrow circle of auditors. It is true even of those languages which have the widest sweep, which are most widely spoken by the mass of the population of vast areas. It is necessarily even more true of nations which are restricted in the number of persons who are brought up in the knowledge of the language which alone will enable them to appreciate real literature couched in those languages: and when I think of this tragedy, which touches all literature without exception, I sympathise with, although I recognise the impossibility of, that mediæval dream which hoped that in some one language—in Latin for instance—might be found a universal vehicle through which men of all ages and times and forms of human belief might exhibit in literary form their artistic powers of creation. It was a dream. It was a dream which never could be realised, and which the world seems no nearer realising than it did some centuries ago. But I rejoice to think that though, from the nature of the case, those who give to their fellow-countrymen literature in the Welsh language—though it is confined to comparatively few who can properly appreciate their work—I rejoice to think that at the same time the people of Wales had from immemorial ages shown themselves to be masters of another form of artistic expression not confined by national barriers or hampered by linguistic limitations. . . . [1909.]

66. From the point of view of the after-dinner speaker, I suppose all toasts may be divided, according to the

magnitude of their subject-matter, into three categories. You may have those which are so small that it is hardly possible to beat them out thin enough to fill up a speech; you may have those which are of that degree of complexity with which the speaker may be expected adequately to deal; and you may have those which are obviously so large, that cover such a vast area, that neither an after-dinner speaker nor even the volumes which industry and research pour forth year after year can hope finally to compass or to exhaust.

Of those three categories I have no doubt that the last is the most convenient for the after-dinner speaker. If you have got to deal with the first, your difficulty is to find the material. If you have got to deal with the second, you are severely criticised if you do not cover the ground. No human being expects you to cover the ground of literature, and criticism disappears almost before the speaker rises by the consciousness of every one of his hearers that whatever he says, even if he be gifted with the tongue of angels, he can neither cover the ground nor can he say anything which will give the smallest impetus or impulse to those great movements of the human spirit of which literature is itself the product.

And yet although literature be thus in the third and most agreeable category of subjects of after-dinner speaking, it has some defects. Is it to deal with the past, the present, or the future? It is folly to try to touch upon the past. We do not drink the health of the Immortals. Their position is assured. Nothing which any speaker can say, whether he be an after-dinner speaker or in whatever position he may be to address the public, can add to their fame. He cannot illustrate their merits. He cannot alter the opinion of any human being as to the claims they have upon our affection and upon our regard.

Is the speaker to deal with the future? Of the future of literature luckily no man can say anything. I say luckily because I am not one of those who believe that such a subject can be usefully brought under the rule of scientific law, that you can prophesy from the present what is to come.

Then, are we to deal with the present? Who would venture on this, or indeed on any other occasion, to try and appreciate the merits, the comparative merits of living authors, or to say what niche of fame they are going to occupy in the future, or how they will compare with their predecessors, or how they will influence those who come after them? But you have only to look at the writings of distinguished critics to see how carefully they fight shy of any estimate of contemporary merit. They deal with the past splendidly, adequately; they deal with it in these days in a manner which our forefathers never dreamt of, and which our forefathers could not rival; but of the present day they do not feel themselves, as far as I can form an opinion, to be adequate judges; they neither pronounce their views of the merits of the living nor do they attempt to forecast the relative fame which they will occupy in the future. Therefore it will be admitted that if you are to deal neither with the past nor with the future, and if you are confined to the present under the conditions which I have attempted to describe, the task of any man touching on the topic of literature is not an easy one.

And yet, difficult though it may be, how interesting it is, for we are told by great critics that the literature of an age is its picture, that if you look at the past and really grasp the character of the literature which appealed to it, you will understand that past, that a generation cannot

express itself more clearly than in the literature it produces and the literature which it encourages. We must therefore conceive ourselves as having our photographs, our cinematograph, taken, month after month, by the literature which we buy, which we read, which we admire, and which we absorb. That is going to represent us to the future critic. By that, according to this theory, we shall be judged. That is the picture which is going down to posterity of the souls of this generation.

And I think there is truth—I think there is force—in this contention, which must impress everybody who reflects upon it.

Yet I would venture to suggest to those who advance this theory in its more extreme form, that it may be easily pressed too far. As I understand the theory, it depends upon this: That there is in each epoch, at each moment of time, a public taste which admits certain forms of genius or talent to suit itself, and which crushes out the remainder, which acts as stained glass acts upon light, letting through rays of a certain quality and character and absorbing the rest.

And if you are going to accept this view that there is a particular public taste at a particular moment, depending wholly upon the character of the society at the time, then I think there may be truth in that doctrine. But let us always remember that this taste itself, this taste which is supposed to act as a differentiating medium, is a thing which is capable of being changed by the action of literature, by the action of genius and of talent. It is not that talent finds itself face to face with this kind of unchangeable, transparent medium, only letting through certain rays and pitilessly rejecting others. That does not represent the facts. Taste can be changed; it is a

matter of manufacture. Every great producer will tell you—every great producer of luxuries will tell you—that he has not only to produce the things which the public want, but he has to make the public want them; and when he has made the public want them he calls that good business. A similar process, but with a very different motive, is carried out by the man of genius, by the man of originality, by the man whose natural gifts do not run precisely in the line of contemporary fashion, but rather force him and press him on to a new mode of expression of ideas which themselves may be new. He also can change the taste by which he is to be judged. He also can act upon this translucent screen which lets through some rays, rejects some, and absorbs others. And nothing is more interesting than to watch, not how the public taste compels one kind of literature and one kind of literature alone, or literature within a limited class of literary effort, to succeed, but how despite itself the public is made by the force of genius to accept some new mode of expression, some new ideal of art, some living change in the perpetually living process of the human spirit.

Do not let us look at artistic and literary production in too mechanical a fashion. Literature is not the result merely of what are called sociological causes. Not only is it not that result, but it is not determined by it. It is determined by the interaction of those causes and the individual genius which no scientific generalisation can class, which no scientific prophecy can foretell.

Therefore it is that I for my part am reluctant to see literature treated in what is called too scientific a spirit, because I think that science in dealing with this progress of the free human spirit is really going far beyond—I

will not say its future capacity, for I do not wish to set bounds to the power of science—but far beyond anything which it can do at present. We must take genius as an accepted fact, and when we have so taken it, it is folly to try and bind it down into the limits of any formula whatever.

The making of taste by a great man of letters, or a great artist, or a great school of art, is one of the most interesting phenomena, as I think, in one of the most fascinating subjects of study, namely, literary and artistic history ; and I sometimes feel as if imperfect justice was done to those who begin to make the taste by which the efforts of subsequent genius are rendered possible. We talk of the forerunners of a particular movement, a particular literary development, a particular artistic or musical development, and we analyse the gain which greater successors obtain from their works, how these greater successors borrow a particular method and develop a particular mode of using their artistic instruments.

But I think sometimes we forget another and quite different service which these forerunners did. They began to make the atmosphere, the climate, possible, in which their greater successors are to flourish. They started the taste which their successors are going to use, and you will constantly find, therefore, that the beginners of a great literary or artistic movement are far inferior to their successors ; but you have to acknowledge that without them, without in the first place the additions and changes they have made in artistic method, and also without the changes they have made in that taste, in that æsthetic climate in which alone the new works can flourish, their greater successors would never have obtained the deserved fame which has enshrined them in the love of their fellow-creatures.

However, I think I said earlier in my speech that I did not much care myself for attempts to reduce literary history to a science, and I feel perhaps that in the observations I have made I have run somewhat counter to my own canon. The pleasures that I derive personally from literary history are biographical. They are the pleasures of feeling myself brought into direct contact by the writer with great men who have long passed away ; and another pleasure, not at all to be despised, of being brought into contact with the living and contemporary taste of the critic himself. That double pleasure I, individually, derive from literary criticism ; and I think the two things together make up, so far as I am concerned, the sum of those great feelings of gratification which literary history has always given me.

If that be the true way of considering those whose business it is to deal with the great men of letters of the past, I suppose I ought to try before I sit down, I will not say to offer a criticism upon the present, but to give expression to a personal predilection with regard to contemporary literature.

There was a brilliant novel written by a contemporary author which narrated the cheerful successes of the hero, who went from one fortunate enterprise to another, until at the end he reached the goal of his ambitions. The novel ends with the final triumph of the hero, and a friendly critic observes, "After all, what has this man done ? With what great cause is he identified ?" The novel ends with the answer of another friend to this carping critic, "After all, he has contributed to the great cause of cheering us all up." Now, I am constantly being asked to contribute to causes of one sort or another. They are very seldom, I regret to say, causes which are likely to

cheer us all up. I hope they are useful; I believe in many cases they are necessary: but that great function of cheering us up they do not perform. I think myself that is a great function, one of the great functions of literature.

I do not at all deny, of course, that things sad, sorrowful, tragic, even dreary, may be and are susceptible of artistic treatment, and that they have been, and are, admirably treated by great literary artists. But for my own part I prefer more cheerful weather.

Now, I think that literature is less cheerful than it was when I was young. It may be that it is because I am growing old that I take this gloomier view of literary effort; but still I personally like the Spring day and bright sun and the birds singing, and, if there be a shower or a storm, it should be merely a passing episode in the landscape, to be followed immediately by a return of brilliant sunshine. Whilst that is what I prefer, I of course admit that a great picturesque striking storm is a magnificent subject for artistic treatment, and is well worthy of the efforts of great artists. I am not quite sure whether the dreary day in which nothing is seen, in which the landscape does not change, in which there is a steady but not violent downpour of rain, in which you feel that you can neither look out of the window nor walk out of doors, in which every passer-by seems saddened by the perpetual and unbroken melancholy of the scene—I do not say that that ought not to be treated as a subject of literature. Everything, after all, which is real is a potential subject of literature. As long as it is treated sincerely, as long as it is treated directly, as long as it is an immediate experience, no man has the right to complain of it. But it is not what I ask of literature.

What I ask from literature mainly is that, in a world which is full of sadness and difficulty, in which you go through a day's stress and come back from your work weary, you should find in literature something which represents life, indeed which is true, in the highest sense of truth, to what is and what is imagined to be true, but which does cheer us up.

Therefore, when I ask you, as I now do, to drink the Toast of Literature, I shall myself *sotto voce* as I drink it, say, not literature merely, but that literature in particular which serves the great cause of cheering us all up.

[1912.]

## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

[*The extracts under this heading are taken from the Lecture delivered in connection with the Cambridge University Local Lectures, August 1900.*]

67. WHEN we isolate a century for particular consideration, what kind of period have we in our minds? The negative answer at all events seems plain. It is seldom, except by accident, precisely the same period for two aspects of what we loosely but conveniently call the same century. Nature does not exhibit her uniformity by any pedantic adherence to the decimal system; and if we insist on substituting rigid and arbitrary divisions of historical time for natural ones, half the significance of history will be lost for us.

68. It so happens, for example, that I dislike the seventeenth century and like the eighteenth. I do not pretend to justify my taste. Perhaps it is that there is a kind of unity and finish about the eighteenth century wanting to its predecessor. Perhaps I am prejudiced against the latter by my dislike of its religious wars, which were more than half-political, and its political wars, which were more than half-religious. In any case the matter is quite unimportant. What is more to our present purpose is to ask, whether the nineteenth century,

yet presents itself to any of us sufficiently as a whole to suggest any sentiment of the kind I have just illustrated. I confess that, for my own part, it does not. Of that part of it with which most of us are alone immediately acquainted—say the last third—I feel I can in this connection say nothing. We are too much of it to judge it. The two remaining thirds, on the other hand, seem to me so different that I cannot criticise them together: and, if I am to criticise them separately, I acknowledge at once that it is the first third, and not the second, that engages my sympathies. There are those, I am aware, who think that the great Reform Bill was the beginning of wisdom. Very likely they are right. But this is not a question of right but a question of personal predilection, and from that point of view the middle third of the nineteenth century does not, I acknowledge, appeal to me. It is probably due to the natural ingratitude which we are apt to feel towards our immediate predecessors. But I justify it to myself by saying that it reminds me too much of Landseer's pictures and the revival of Gothic;<sup>1</sup> that I feel no sentiment of allegiance towards any of the intellectual dynasties which then held sway; that neither the thin lucidity of Mill nor the windy prophesying of Carlyle, neither Comte nor yet Newman, were ever able to arouse in me the enthusiasm of a disciple: that I turn with pleasure from the Corn Law squabbles to the great War, from Thackeray and Dickens to Scott and Miss Austen, even from Tennyson and Browning to Keats, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Shelley.

Observations like these, however, are rather in the nature of individual fancies than impersonal or "objective" criticisms.

69. In the last hundred years the world has seen great wars, great national and social upheavals, great religious movements, great economic changes. Literature and Art have had their triumphs, and have permanently enriched the intellectual inheritance of our race. Yet, large as is the space which subjects like these legitimately fill in our thoughts, much as they will occupy the future historian, it is not among them that I seek for the most important and the most fundamental differences which separate the present from preceding ages. Rather is this to be found in the cumulative products of scientific research, to which no other period offers a precedent or a parallel. No single discovery, it may be, can be compared in its results to that of Copernicus. No single discoverer can be compared in genius to Newton. But in their total effects, the advances made by the nineteenth century are not to be matched. The difficulty is not so much to find the departments of knowledge which are either entirely new or have suffered complete reconstruction, but to find the departments of knowledge in which no such revolutionary change has taken place. Classical scholarship, the political history of certain limited periods, abstract mechanics, astronomy, in so far as it depends on abstract mechanics —can this list be very greatly lengthened? I hardly think so. And if not, consider how vast must be the regions first effectively conquered for knowledge during the period under discussion.

But not only is this surprising increase of knowledge new, but the use to which it has been put is new also. The growth of industrial invention is not a fact we are permitted to forget; we do, however, sometimes forget how much of it is due to a close connection between theoretic knowledge and its utilitarian application,

which in its degree is altogether unexampled in the history of mankind. It was dreamed of in the speculations of poet-philosophers like Bacon ; here and there it has been sporadically exemplified. Thus surgery must, I suppose, have always depended largely on anatomy, navigation upon astronomy, telescope-making upon optics, and so on. But, speaking broadly, it was not till the present century that the laboratory and the workshop were brought into intimate connection ; that the man of practice began humbly to wait on the man of theory ; that the man of practice even discovered that a little theory would do him no irretrievable damage in the prosecution of his business.

I suppose that at this moment if we were allowed a vision of the embryonic forces which are predestined most potently to affect the future of mankind, we should have to look for them, not in the legislature, nor in the press, nor on the platform, not in the schemes of practical statesmen, nor the dreams of political theorists, but in the laboratories of scientific students whose names are but little in the mouths of men, who cannot themselves forecast the results of their own labours, and whose theories could scarce be understood by those whom they will chiefly benefit.

70. Marvellous as is the variety and ingenuity of modern industrial methods, they almost all depend, in the last resort, upon our supply of useful power, and our supply of useful power is principally provided for us by methods which, so far as I can see, have altered not at all in principle, and strangely little in detail, since the days of Watt. Coal, as we all know, is the chief reservoir of energy from which the world at present draws ; and

from which we in this country must always draw. But our main contrivance for utilising it is the steam-engine; and by its essential nature the steam-engine is extravagantly wasteful; so that when we are told, as if it was something to be proud of, that this is the age of steam, we may admit the fact, but can hardly share the satisfaction. Our coalfields, as we know too well, are limited. We certainly cannot increase them; the boldest legislator would hesitate to limit their employment for purposes of domestic industry; so that the only possible alternative is to economise our method of consuming them. And for this there would indeed seem to be a sufficiency of room. Let a second Watt arise; let him bring into general use some mode of extracting energy from fuel which shall *only* waste 80 per cent. of it—and lo! your coalfields, as sources of power, are doubled at once!

The hope seems a modest one, but apparently we are not yet in sight of its fulfilment; and therefore it is that we must qualify the satisfaction with which, at the end of the century, we contemplate the unbroken course of its industrial triumphs. We have, in truth, been little better than brilliant spendthrifts. Every new invention seems to throw a new strain upon the vast, but not illimitable, resources of nature. We dissipate in an hour what it required a thousand years to accumulate. Sooner or later the stored-up resources of the world will be exhausted. Humanity, having used or squandered its capital, will thenceforward have to depend upon such current income as can be derived from the diurnal heat of the sun and the rotation of the earth, till, in the sequence of the ages, these also begin to fail. With such remote speculations we are not now concerned; it is enough for us to take note how rapidly the pro-

digious progress of recent discovery has increased the drain upon the natural wealth of old manufacturing countries, and especially of Great Britain; and at the same time frankly to recognise that it is only by new inventions that the collateral evils of old inventions can be mitigated; that to go back is impossible; that our only hope lies in a further advance.

After all, however, it is not necessarily the material and obvious results of scientific discoveries which are of the deepest interest. They have effected changes more subtle, and perhaps less obvious, which are at least as worthy of our consideration, and are at least as unique in the history of the civilised world.

71. The discoveries in physics and in chemistry which have borne their share in thus re-creating<sup>1</sup> for us the evolution of the past are in process of giving us quite new ideas as to the inner nature of that material Whole of which the worlds traversing space are but an insignificant part. Differences of quality, once thought ultimate, are constantly being resolved into differences of motion or configuration. What were once regarded as things are now known to be movements. Phenomena apparently so wide apart as light, radiant heat, and electricity are, as it is unnecessary to remind you, now recognised as substantially identical. The arrangement of atoms in the molecule, not less than their intrinsic nature, produces the characteristic attributes of the compound. The atom itself has been pulverised,<sup>2</sup> and speculation is forced to admit as a possibility that even the chemical elements themselves may be no more than varying arrangements of a common substance. Plausible

<sup>1</sup> Illustrating.

<sup>2</sup> Analysed.

attempts have been made to reduce the physical universe, with its infinite variety, its glory of colour and of form, its significance, and its sublimity, to one homogeneous medium, in which there are no distinctions to be discovered but distinction of movement or of stress; and although no such hypothesis can, I suppose, be yet accepted, the gropings of physicists after this, or some other not less audacious unification, must finally, I think, be crowned with success.

The change of view which I have endeavoured to indicate is purely scientific, but its consequences cannot be confined to science. How will they manifest themselves in other regions of human activity—in Literature, in Art, in Religion? The subject is one rather for the lecturer on the twentieth century than for the lecturer on the nineteenth. I at least cannot endeavour to grapple with it. But before concluding, I will ask one question about it and hazard one prophecy. My question relates to Art. We may, I suppose, say that artistic feeling constantly expresses itself in the vivid presentation of sensuous fact and its remote<sup>1</sup> emotional suggestion. Will it in time be dulled by a theory<sup>2</sup> of the world which carries with it no emotional suggestion, which is perpetually merging<sup>3</sup> the sensuous fact in its physical explanation, whose main duty indeed it is to tear down the cosmic scene-painting and expose the scaffolding and wheelwork by which the world of sense-perception is produced? I do not know. I do not hazard a conjecture. But the subject is worth consideration.

So much for my question. My prophecy relates to Religion. We have frequently seen in the history of thought that any development of the mechanical con-

<sup>1</sup> Connected.

<sup>2</sup> The theory above.

<sup>3</sup> Losing sight of.

ception of the physical world gives an impulse to materialistic speculation. Now, if the goal to which, consciously or unconsciously, the modern physicist is pressing, be ever reached, the mechanical view of things will receive an extension and a completeness never before dreamed of. There would then in truth be only one natural science, namely, physics; and only one kind of explanation, namely, the dynamic. If any other science claimed a separate existence it could only be because its work was as yet imperfectly performed, because it had not as yet pressed sufficiently far its analysis of cause and effect. Would this conception, in its turn, foster a new and refined materialism? For my own part I conjecture that it would not. I believe that the very completeness and internal consistency of such a view of the physical world would establish its inadequacy. The very fact that within it there seemed no room for Spirit would convince mankind that Spirit must be invoked to explain it. I know not how the theoretic reconciliation will be effected; for I mistrust the current philosophical theories upon the subject. But that in some way or other future generations will, each in its own way, find a practical *modus vivendi* between the natural and the spiritual I do not doubt at all; and if, a hundred years hence, some lecturer, whose parents are not yet born, shall discourse to your successors in this place on the twentieth century, it may be that he will note the fact that, unlike their forefathers, men of his time were no longer disquieted by the controversies once suggested by that well-worn phrase, "the conflict between Science and Religion."

## NOVELS

72. STATISTICIANS devote themselves to many calculations of small interest to the world at large. There is one calculation which I wish they could make, and that is, to give us the percentage of persons who ever take a sincere interest in anything which deserves to be called literature which is not in the shape of a novel. It is hard to believe that there was a time when the world did without novels, and, in its own opinion, did well without novels. Like tobacco and the daily Press, novels have now become a general necessity. You may have your own special views both as to tobacco and as to the daily Press, but, whatever your individual views may be, every impartial observer has long ago come to the conclusion that the world will insist on having both of these luxuries to the end of time. They belong to those superfluities which, by the progress of events, have become general necessities. And what is true of these luxuries or of these necessities —call them which you please—is equally true of the modern novel. It is impossible to conceive a time arriving when the great bulk of the reading world will be content to be deprived of their annual supply of narrative literature, poured forth each year apparently in a stream of ever-increasing volume—a stream which, whether it carries cargoes of value or not, is not likely, in my judgment at all events, ever to be allowed to go unfreighted to the sea. It is an interesting speculation, a speculation like most others connected with the future, of very small

practical value, but an interesting speculation nevertheless, to reflect as to what the future of the novel is to be. I take it that there is hardly any instance in literature of any sub-class of composition being cultivated with success for an indefinite period. Such classes seem to have, like other natural products, their periods of rise, their periods of culmination, and their periods of decay. And the cause of that decay is commonly to be found either in the habit they have of driving peculiarities to excess, so that the whole species of composition seems weighed down by its own exaggerations, or else dying away in a kind of senile imbecility, and perishing slowly amid general contempt. I think you may find an example of the first case in the death of the Elizabethan Drama, and of the second in that particular kind of literature of which Pope was the greatest ornament. But the novel, as far as I can judge, appears likely to suffer, or at all events likely to perish, from neither of these diseases. If there be any signs of weariness, of fatigue at all, any signs of decadence or decay, perhaps we should look for it in the obvious difficulty which novelists now find in getting hold of appropriate subjects for their art to deal with. Scott, remember, had not only his unique genius to depend upon, but he had the special good fortune to open an entirely new vein, to strike, practically, an entirely new subject or set of subjects, to give to the world the delight of looking at a set of pictures, of periods, of countries, of ranks of society, of forms of civilisation, of which they had no notion before.

Where is the modern novelist to find a new vein? Every country has been ransacked to obtain theatres<sup>1</sup> on which their imaginary characters are to show themselves

<sup>1</sup> Scenes, localities.

off. Every period has been ransacked to supply historical characters, or imaginary characters belonging to particular ages, who are to provide the *dramatis personæ* of these imaginary tales. We have stories of civilised life, of semi-civilised life, of barbarous life. There is hardly an island in the Pacific Ocean—there is not a part of Africa, of America, of Asia, or of Europe—in which the novelist has not sought for, and often found with great success, fresh material on which to exercise himself. We have novels of the natural and the supernatural; we have scientific novels; we have thaumaturgic novels; we have novels dealing not only with what is beautiful but with what is ugly, not only with what is interesting but with what is uninteresting; we have novels in which everything which could happen to anybody happens to the hero in the course of the three volumes; and we have novels in which the peculiarity seems to be that nothing happens to anybody from the beginning to the end. Finally, so hardly set are we for subjects that even the quintessence of dullness is extracted from the dullest lives of the dullest localities, and turned into a subject of artistic treatment. A dullness that never was on sea or land—to parody the quotation<sup>1</sup> so happily used by our Chairman this evening—is now employed with exquisite and admirable skill to furnish forth entertainment for mankind at large. I am far from denying that even this may be, and is, a legitimate subject for artistic treatment, though I frankly admit that the works produced under that particular form of inspiration are works which I prefer to admire at a distance.

If it be true, as I think it is true, that the whole field

<sup>1</sup> "A light that never was, on sea or land."—Wordsworth, *Elegiac Stanzas*.

of history, the whole world of geography, that every class, every section of mankind, has been ransacked for subjects, there is yet one, strange as it may seem—there really is one aspect of human nature, and perhaps the most interesting of all, which, for obvious reasons, has been very sparingly treated by the novelist. I mean the development of character extending through the life of the individual. The development of character arising out of the stress of some particular shock, some particular concatenation of circumstances, has of course been from time immemorial the great theme of dramatic authors and of authors of fiction: but the aspect of human nature which is dealt with by biography has from the very nature of the case not lent itself readily to artistic treatment in the form of fiction. You hear it sometimes stated that a novel is after all an imaginary biography. In truth, no description could be less accurate. A novel never—well, I was going to put it too strongly—a novel seldom or never, not in one case in a hundred, not in one ~~case in~~ a thousand, attempts to take an individual and to trace what in natural science would be called his life history. The very pleasure which we get from a good biography—the tracing of a man's life from childhood to youth, from youth to maturity, from maturity to age—is practically excluded from the sphere of the novelist; and it is curious that that should be so at a time when the historical aspect of things, when the life history of individuals, of institutions, of nations, of species, of the great globe itself, forms so large a portion of the subject-matter of science, and gives so great an interest to all scientific and to all historical studies. It would be very inappropriate and very unnecessary to dwell upon the reasons why this biographical form of fiction is diffi-

cult—I will not say impossible, but difficult; and I certainly do not venture to foretell that any artist will be found able to overcome the difficulty.

But whatever be the future of the novel, whatever be the future of creative and imaginative literature—and sometimes most of us are tempted to feel that the future is clouded with many doubts—we may always console ourselves by the reflection that every great literary revival has been preceded by a period in which no revival could by any possibility have been anticipated by the closest critic of the time. I doubt whether any contemporary of Sidney could have foreseen Shakespeare. I doubt whether anybody living under the Commonwealth could really have foreseen Dryden in his maturity. I feel sure that nobody who lived at the time of the death of Johnson could really have foreseen Wordsworth and Coleridge and Scott. It may be true that, looking back, we can find the germs of what ultimately burst out into those great literary revivals; but no contemporary spectator, however acute his vision, however anxious to see the first ~~dawn~~ of some new literary day, could have ventured to prophesy of that which [an interval of] only a few years was destined to bring to the birth; and, therefore, if, though admiring greatly the contemporary efforts of our novel writers, I feel that nevertheless, in spite of their scholarly ability, their inventiveness, their power of style, something of fatigue, something of weariness, appears to hang over contemporary production, that is no ground in my judgment for despairing of the future. We can convince ourselves by studying the past that literary prophecy is, of all prophecy, the vainest, and in this particular instance we may draw consolation from that conclusion.

## THE PRESS

73. FOR, after all, the connections in these modern days of democracy between Parliamentary government and the Press are so close and so intimate that though they have never been embodied in an Act of Parliament, though they find no place in the book of precedents or of Parliamentary custom, yet the connection is so close that perhaps the most important wheel of the political machine at the present moment is that which is supplied by the Newspaper Press of this country. I do not profess to say whether our present form of government is the best possible. Engineers, I believe, estimate the efficiency of a machine by comparing the proportion of the total ~~energy~~ used by the machine in external work with that which is used in internal friction. On that system of valuation I frankly admit that I do not think we are a very effective political machine, for it appears to me that the amount of internal friction is certainly out of all proportion to the amount of external work which the circumstances of our position enable us to do.

I do not know that we ought too rigidly to apply these mechanical parallels to political institutions. I, at all events, do not mean to quarrel with the institutions under which I live. I was born into the world about the middle of this century, and I mean to make the best of the period in which my lot is cast. I am certainly not going to say, either here or elsewhere, that I believe that the

system of government by debate under which we live is not a system which can produce admirably fruitful results to the community at large. I confess that the burden thrown upon the individual is considerable, and that probably there are many gentlemen actively engaged in political work who would desire to see some kind of trades union, or agreement at all events let us call it, between the two sides in politics that for some months in each year—let us say six months of each year—there should be some abstention from political recrimination. I, at all events, so far as I am concerned, would gladly go into what I think in another sphere is called a retreat, and meditate over my own political sins, provided it were possible for me by such a proceeding to escape the necessity of commenting in public upon the political sins of my opponents. However, I see no sign of such a consummation at the present moment; on the contrary, the appetite for oratory in the public at large, like the appetite for newspapers with which it is closely connected, appears to be absolutely incapable of satisfaction. . . . [1892.]

74. The Press of England has made such progress during the last two or three generations that every citizen of the Empire may well be proud of it as a mere example—if only as a mere example—of the intelligence, enterprise, and skill of her citizens. We habitually boast of the extension of our railway, our postal and telegraph system, as great undertakings which render the complex work of modern society possible; but we ought to add, and we must add, the Newspaper Press, as an agent of communicating news—in its capacity of disseminating news, in its capacity as a great instrument for bringing into communication different classes of the community, as

an advertising agent, which is, after all, of the first importance to any civilised society, inasmuch as it brings together those who have something to sell and those who have something to buy: in all these ways the Press of the country fulfils the function entrusted to them as, I believe, the Press of no other country can boast of doing. Some gentleman laughed when I mentioned advertising. Well, I think I shall have a word to say about advertising directly. I will only now mention it under this broad connection, because, in my judgment, the foreign correspondence, the Parliamentary report, and all the other machinery of communicating news to the public, really are not of more importance to the community than the power of communicating by advertisement, of bringing the buyer and seller together, and giving them some machinery for communicating their wishes one to another.

The thing that interests me most in the modern development of the Press is a point which I have seldom seen taken, but which is nevertheless of profound significance, so far as my judgment goes, in estimating the importance of the Press as a great social organism. We habitually assume what is, no doubt, the fact that a newspaper must necessarily be both a means of communicating news, and a means of promoting particular kinds of opinion. There is really no necessary connection between the two. It is a fact, no doubt, that every newspaper which communicates news also has its leading articles, in which it propagates certain opinions, gives effect to certain criticisms, and does its best to promote the growth of a certain class of public sentiment: but there is no necessary connection between those two functions, though both are undertaken by the Newspaper Press; and it has

always struck me as most singular, looked at from a purely abstract and philosophic point of view, that, as a matter of fact, the functions of a newspaper as a means of communicating news give it a power of supporting particular opinions wholly different, wholly alien, as it were, to the popularity of those particular opinions or to the number of the public who desire to see those particular opinions expressed. I do not, of course, at all mean that in the long run it is not necessary for every newspaper, by its leading articles, by the general opinions which it expresses and enforces, to gain the favour of the particular class to whom it appeals; but everybody knows that a newspaper may gain such a position as an organ for disseminating news that on the basis of its purely commercial success it may advocate and promote for a period almost any opinions which it chooses. In a different sphere we call that an endowment. It is practically an endowment of a particular political or religious or social party, and the peculiarity of it is that those who are called upon to endow it have no notion of what they are doing, and very often strongly object to what is being done. I am addressing a Society which represents all newspapers, but which probably more represents the great Provincial Press of this country than it does the London Press. At all events, in its historic origin it did so, and it does so still. I remember a long time ago—it is within my memory—that a great provincial newspaper advocated, in its capacity as a guide to public opinion, sentiments which were not at all congenial to the great mass of the persons who advertised in its columns, and it occurred to them to try, by advertising in some other newspapers, with less circulation, to bring this particular newspaper to its knees, as it were. They totally failed in

their attempt. It was discovered that this species of "boycotting"—to use a modern phrase—really would not stand against the individual interest of the advertiser, and the result was that a great community, by the mere fact that a newspaper got hold of a certain public and a certain circulation, were compelled, against their will, to subsidise opinions from which they profoundly dissented. I believe that a not very dissimilar case has happened recently in connection with a very interesting and important social problem—I mean the problem of publishing betting and gambling. There have been newspapers which have written very strongly upon that subject in their capacity as guides to public opinion, while in their capacity of purveyors of news they very properly, in my opinion, gave the odds on all the races. And what was the result? The result was that people who wanted to know the odds bought the paper, and by so doing subsidised or endowed the propaganda of the very opinions from which they most profoundly dissented.

Just conceive what some visitant from another planet, ignorant of the history of the Press, ignorant, let us say, of the general principles on which we regulate, and properly regulate, our social life, would say to such a state of things. He would say, "What are we to think of a community which deliberately permits an arrangement by which those are taxed to endow certain opinions who dissent from the opinions in almost everything?" I think he would justly say that a more remarkable contrivance never had been devised by any intelligent being. Of course, we all know that this is a question which has grown up by a natural process, and by a process so natural that no human being would think of interfering; but when I hear of the freedom of the

Press, so ably eulogised by Sir Evelyn Wood, I cannot help thinking that, though by our laws we permit, and rightly permit, wisdom to cry in the market-place where she chooses, I do not think that anybody will regard her unless she is properly supplemented by a large advertisement sheet, and by very carefully compiled columns of news agreeable to the public which has to buy the paper.

I have dwelt upon this peculiarity of our modern journalism because the very circumstance that it has grown up naturally conceals how very singular it is. The growth itself has happened by a process so obvious that we are not lost in any surprise or admiration at the strange results ultimately arrived at; and the question that forces itself upon us is: if we have amongst us these great endowed corporations, which practically have it in their power to promote, irrespective of almost all public opinion, what views they choose to take on public policy, do we not run some danger that powers so great may be abused? I think that if this question had been put *a priori*, and without experience to my imaginary visitant from Saturn, he would have said there would be such a chance. I do not think, however, that if he had been accustomed to our system in its actual working, he would have thought that would be the case. Great as is the power of newspapers, I do not think anybody could say that it is to an important extent abused. They practically, being themselves the critics, are almost above criticism; and yet, though probably every public man feels that occasionally he receives an undeserved castigation from some important members of that great body, I do not think that any person would maintain that, as a whole, the immense and irresponsible

powers of the English Press are abused for any base purpose whatever.

I do not think that this assembly would like me to dwell upon the superiority, upon the qualities in which I think we are distinguished for the better from the Press of other countries; but at all events we may, I think, justly boast and say of ourselves that, in the first place, the Press is absolutely independent of any Government influence or control. We may say of ourselves, in the second place, that any form of blackmailing—I allude to the darkest vices which have been alleged against the Press in certain parts of the civilised world—is absolutely unknown. And I think we may say, in the third place, that though, of course, a Radical politician does not expect flowery eulogies from a Unionist Press, no more than a Unionist politician expects to be photographed in the public interest in the best light by a Radical Press, still the Press, with all its power, never directs that power against individuals—that no individual's career has ever been ruined or crushed by a flagitious use of the great influence which the Press possesses; that on the whole, every side of every question does, in the long run, get a fair hearing through the medium of the great organisation which you represent; and that public opinion, though it may err for a moment, though it may wave backwards and forwards with the natural swing to which all public opinions are subjected, is nevertheless, on the whole, well served by those great mediums of information, those great organs of propaganda, of which you, gentlemen, are the representatives. . . . . [1895.]

75. I do not think it would be proper that I should

terminate a speech of thanks in reply to this toast without saying, on behalf of all the members of the House of Commons present and absent, how much we recognise what we owe to those who watch and report our proceedings. There may be some kind of collision of interest. The man who did more than any one else to promote Parliamentary reporting about a hundred years ago is said to have summarised his opinion in this short sentence: "The members of the House of Commons never thought the report of their speeches too long, and the public never thought them too short." There is, no doubt, that perennial difference of opinion between the makers of speeches and those who first report and then print them. Nevertheless, although reporting is contrary to all the standing orders of the House, and is a gross breach<sup>1</sup> of our privileges, it must be admitted that the reporting has been, and is, admirably done in this country. In the first place, it is, as far as I know, absolutely impartial. I do not say that of the accounts of the debates. I think if you compare the general conspectus, the general picture of a debate drawn in one journal with that in another of a different political complexion, you will probably find some difficulty in reconciling conflicting views. But the reporting of what is actually said is, I believe, absolutely impartial and excellent. Moreover, most of us who have to make speeches—and I am told that, judged by the number of columns, I make more speeches than anybody else in the House of Commons—suspect that the speaker owes more to the reporter than, perhaps, we are always prepared to admit. I do not go to the length of saying that all the good things are put into a speech which the speaker

<sup>1</sup> i.e. technically.

never uttered, though that has been done. Lord Brougham is said to have republished a speech of his into which the reporter had put a good many quotations from Cicero. I give public notice that if any speech of mine appears with Latin quotations in it those quotations are due to the reporter, and are not due to me. At all events, the classic languages apart, we all of us owe to the kind attention of the reporter the excision of many superfluities—not always, perhaps, regarded as superfluities by the orator, the correction of many gross errors of grammar, and an improvement of our oratory which we may be reluctant to admit, but which is nevertheless there. [1908.]

76. Above all, let nobody suppose that I do not recognise to the full the function of the Imperial Press in promoting that mutual comprehension which is the basis of mutual esteem between different parts of the Empire.

There is always a difficulty in different sections of one great community fully understanding, fully sympathising with, and being always fair to other and different parts. I have heard it said that many gentlemen who come from Canada, or Australia, or New Zealand, or the Cape, are sometimes pained by the ignorance shown by dwellers in this part of the Empire with regard to even the largest of their domestic interests. They need not be pained that ignorance is to be found within these small islands, and you will find illustrations of it as regards centres of population no further distant than would occupy you in reaching them two or three or half a dozen hours in a railway carriage. Let us remember that busy men, moving in the narrow circle of their own personal affairs, do not always find it easy sympathetically to grasp or thoroughly to understand the affairs of even their closest

friends and neighbours in other parts of the same great community. That ignorance is perhaps greater at this moment in these islands of the Colonies than it is in the Colonies of these islands; but that is not going to be permanently the case. Every year the number of our countrymen who are born in other portions of the Empire is relatively increasing, and the time will certainly come when, unless trouble be taken to break down these artificial barriers, it will be as difficult for a Canadian or an Australian to understand and imaginatively to grasp the constitution and even the external appearance of these islands, the cradle of their race and the origin of their constitution, as it is for some of us to understand the condition of settlers in a new country with all the vast future which a new country opens out to its inhabitants.

If that be the present difficulty, and if it be a difficulty which time is like to augment rather than to diminish, to what instruments can we look to check what every one must admit would be, if left unchecked, a great evil and a great danger to the Empire? We are all of us parochial by instinct. It is natural to concentrate your mind upon the immediate controversy in which you yourselves and your own interests are obviously mainly concerned. But unless we can inculcate successfully among the great bulk of our population, wherever it may be found, that imaginative, sympathetic insight based upon knowledge, which is the only solid bond of unity—unless we can do that, we shall certainly deprive ourselves of one of the greatest of all bonds that can unite scattered peoples into one organic whole. And it is to carry out the end that I thus indicate that I look above all things to the labours of the Press. They can do it as no other force can do it. . . . [1909.]

## PROGRESS

[*Extracts 77 to 84 are taken from the Address to Glasgow University, November 1891, delivered by Mr. Balfour when Lord Rector.]*

77. THERE is no more interesting characteristic of ordinary social and political speculation than the settled belief that there exists a natural law or tendency governing human affairs by which, on the whole, and in the long run, the general progress of our race is ensured. I do not know that any very precise view is entertained as to the nature of this law or tendency, its mode of operation, or its probable limits ; but it is understood to be established, or at least indicated, by the general course of history, and to be in harmony with modern developments of the doctrine of Evolution.

We have got into the habit of thinking that the efforts at progress made by each generation may not only bear fruit for succeeding ones, in the growth of knowledge, the bettering of habits and institutions, and the increase of wealth, but that there may also be a process, so to speak, of *physiological accumulation*, by which the dexterities painfully learned by the fathers shall descend as inherited aptitudes to the sons, and not merely the manufactured man—man as he makes himself and is made by his surroundings—but the natural man also, may thus go through a course of steady and continuous improvement. It now

seems, I think, probable, that not in this more than in other cases is biology necessarily optimist. For as it has long been known that the causes by which species have been modified are not inconsistent with an immobility of type lasting through geological epochs; as it is also known that these causes may lead to what we call deterioration as well as to what we call improvement; as it is impossible to believe that selection and elimination can play any very important part in the further development of civilised man; so now the gravest doubts have been raised as to whether there are any other physiological causes in operation by which that development is likely to be secured. If this be so, we must regard the raw material, as I have called it, of civilisation as being now, in all probability, at its best, and henceforth for the amelioration of mankind we must look to the perfection of manufacture.<sup>1</sup>

78. In our social and political speculations we are surely apt to think too much of ethnology, and too little of history. Sometimes from a kind of idleness, sometimes from a kind of pride, sometimes because the "principles of heredity" is now always on our lips, we frequently attribute to differences of blood effects which are really due to differences of surroundings. We note, and note correctly, the varying shades of national character; and proceed to put them down, often most incorrectly, to variations in national descent. The population of one district is Teutonic, and therefore it does this; the population of the other district is Celtic, and therefore it does that. A Jewish strain explains one peculiarity; a Greek strain explains another; and so on. Conjectures like

<sup>1</sup> Training (see lines 19, 20, p. 147).

these appear to be of the most dubious value. We know by experience that a nation may suddenly blaze out into a splendour of productive genius, of which its previous history gave but faint promise, and of which its subsequent history shows but little trace ; some great crisis in its fate may stamp upon a race marks which neither lapse of time nor change of circumstance seem able wholly to efface ; and empires may rise from barbarism to civilisation and sink again from civilisation into barbarism, within periods so brief that we may take it as certain, whatever be our opinion as to the transmission of acquired faculties, that no hereditary influence has had time to operate. Now, if the differences between the same nation at different times are thus obviously not due to differences in inherited qualities, is it not somewhat rash to drag in hypothetical differences in inherited qualities to account for the often slighter peculiarities of temperament by which communities of different descent may be distinguished ? Are we not often attributing to heredity what is properly due to education, and crediting Nature with what really is the work of Man ?

So far, then, we have arrived at the double conclusion that, while there is, to say the least, no sufficient ground for expecting that our descendants will be provided by Nature with better "organisms" than our own, it is nevertheless not impossible to suppose that they may be able to provide themselves with a much more commodious "environment." And this is not on the face of it wholly unsatisfactory ; for if, on the one hand, it seems to forbid us to indulge in visions of a millennium in which there shall not only be a new heaven and a new earth, but also a new variety of the human race to enjoy them ; on the other hand it permits us to hope that the efforts of

successive generations may so improve the surroundings into which men are born that the community of the far future may be as much superior to us as we are to our barbarian ancestors.

79. Unquestionably mankind will be able to cultivate the field of scientific discovery to all time without exhausting it. But is it so certain that they will be able indefinitely to extend it? Industrial invention need never cease. But will our general theory of the material Universe again undergo any revolution comparable to that which it has undergone in the last four hundred years? It is at least uncertain. We seem indeed even at this moment to stand on the verge of some great co-ordination of the energies of nature, and to be perhaps within a measurable distance of comprehending the cause of gravitation and the character of that ethereal medium which is the vehicle of Light, Magnetism, and Electricity. Yet though this be true, it is also true that in whatever direction we drive out explorations we come upon limits we cannot, as it seems to me, hope to overpass.

80. No man will ever see what goes on in a gas, or know by direct vision how ether behaves. But we can all of us think of a collision or a vibration, and a few of us can deal with them by calculation. But observe how rapidly the difficulty of comprehension increases as soon as sensible analogies begin to fail, as they do in the case of many electric and magnetic phenomena; and how quickly the difficulty becomes an impossibility when, as in the case of the most important organic processes, the operations to be observed are too minute ever to be seen and too complex ever to be calculated. It is no imperfec-

tion in our instruments which here foils us. It is an incurable imperfection in ourselves. Our senses are very few and very imperfect. They were not, unfortunately, evolved for purposes of research. And though we may well stand amazed at the immense scientific structure which Mankind have been able to raise on the meagre foundations afforded by their feeble sense-perceptions, we can hardly hope to see it added to without limit. Nor is the time necessarily as far distant as we sometimes think, when we may be reduced either to elaborating the details of that which in outline is known already, or to framing dim conjectures about that which cannot scientifically be known at all.

81. How different has been the political history, and yet how similar is the social condition, of Great Britain, France, Germany, Holland, and Belgium. Though these five nations do not for the most part speak the same language, nor profess the same religion, nor claim the same ancestry; though the events by which they have been moulded, and the institutions by which they have been governed, are apparently widely dissimilar; yet their culture is at this moment practically identical, their ideas form a common stock; the social questions they have to face are the same, and such differences as exist in the material condition and well-being of their populations are unquestionably due more to the economic differences in their position, climate, and natural advantages, than to the decisions at which they may have from time to time arrived on the various political controversies by which their peoples have been so bitterly divided. We cannot, of course, conclude from this that political action or inaction has no effect upon the broad

stream of human progress; still less that it may not largely determine for good or for evil the course of its smaller eddies and subsidiary currents. All that we are warranted in saying is that, as a matter of fact, the differences in the political history of these five communities, however interesting to the historian, nay, however important at the moment to the happiness of the populations concerned, are, if estimated by the scale we are at this moment applying to human affairs, almost negligible; and that it must be in connection with the points wherein their political systems agree, that the importance of those systems is principally to be found.

82. Movement, whether of progress or of retrogression, can commonly be brought about only when the sentiments opposing it have been designedly weakened or have suffered a natural decay. In this destructive process, and in any constructive process by which it may be followed, reasoning, often very bad reasoning, bears, at least in Western communities, a large share as cause, a still larger share as symptom; so that the clatter of contending argumentation is often the most striking accompaniment of interesting social changes. Its position, therefore, and its functions in the social organism, are frequently misunderstood. People fall instinctively into the habit of supposing that, as it plays a conspicuous part in the improvement or deterioration of human institutions, it therefore supplies the very basis on which they may be made to rest, the very mould to which they ought to conform; and they naturally conclude that we have only got to reason more and to reason better in order speedily to perfect the whole machinery by which human felicity is to be secured.

Surely this is a great delusion. A community founded upon argument would soon be a community no longer. It would dissolve into its constituent elements. Think of the thousand ties most subtly woven out of common sentiments, common tastes, common beliefs, nay, common prejudices, by which from our very earliest childhood we are all bound unconsciously but indissolubly together into a compacted whole. Imagine these to be suddenly loosed and their places taken by some judicious piece of reasoning on the balance of advantage, which, after making all proper deductions, still remains to the credit of social life. Imagine nicely adjusting our loyalty and our patriotism to the standard of a calculated utility. Imagine us severally suspending our adhesion to the Ten Commandments until we have leisure and opportunity to decide between the rival and inconsistent philosophies which contend for the honour of establishing them ! These things we may indeed imagine if we please. Fortunately, we shall never see them. Society is founded—and from the nature of the human beings which constitute it, must, in the main, be always founded—not upon criticism but upon feelings and beliefs, and upon the customs and codes by which feelings and beliefs are, as it were, fixed and rendered stable. And even where these harmonise so far as we can judge with sound reason, they are in many cases not consciously based on reasoning ; nor is their fate necessarily bound up with that of the extremely indifferent arguments by which, from time to time, philosophers, politicians, and I will add divines, have thought fit to support them.

This view may, perhaps, be readily accepted in reference, for instance, to Oriental civilisation ; but to some it may seem paradoxical when applied to the free constitu-

tions of the West. Yet, after all, it supplies the only possible justification, I will not say for democratic government only, but for any government whatever based on public opinion. If the business of such a government was to deal with the essential framework of society as an engineer deals with the wood and iron out of which he constructs a bridge, it would be as idiotic to govern by household suffrage as to design the Forth Bridge by household suffrage. Indeed, it would be much more idiotic, because, as we have seen, sociology is far more difficult than engineering. But, in truth, there is no resemblance between the two cases. We habitually talk as if a self-governing or free community was one which managed its own affairs. In strictness, no community manages its own affairs, or by any possibility could manage them. It manages but a narrow fringe of its affairs, and that in the main by deputy. It is only the thinnest surface layer of law and custom, belief and sentiment, which can either be successfully subjected to destructive treatment, or become the nucleus of any new growth—a fact which explains the apparent paradox that so many of our most famous advances in political wisdom are nothing more than the formal recognition of our political impotence.<sup>1</sup>

83. Persecution is only an attempt to do that overtly and with violence which the community is, in self-defence, perpetually doing unconsciously and in silence. In many societies variation of belief is practically impossible. In other societies it is permitted only along certain definite lines. In no society that has ever existed, or could be conceived as existing, are opinions equally

<sup>1</sup> e.g., in the control of thought and religion.

free (in the *scientific* sense of the term, not the *legal*) to develop themselves indifferently in all directions. The constant pressure of custom; the effects of imitation, of education, and of habit; the incalculable influence of man on man, produce a working uniformity of conviction more effectually than the gallows and the stake, though without the cruelty, and with far more than the wisdom that have usually been vouchsafed to official persecutors. Though the production of such a community of ideas as is necessary to make possible the community of life, the encouragement of useful novelties, the destruction of dangerous eccentricities, are thus among the undertakings which, according to modern notions, the State dare scarcely touch, or touches not at all, this is not because these things are unimportant, but because, though among the most important of our affairs, we no longer think we can manage them.

It would seem, then, that in all States, and not least in those which are loosely described as self-governing, the governmental action which can ever be truly described as the conscious application of appropriate means to the attainment of fully-comprehended ends, must, in comparison with the totality of causes affecting the development of the community, be extremely insignificant in amount.

84. It is true that, as I think, there is nothing in what we know of the earthly prospects of humanity fitted fully to satisfy human aspirations. It is true that, as I think, much optimistic speculation about the future is quite unworthy the consideration of serious men. It is true that, as I think, the light-hearted manner in which many persons sketch out their ideas of a reconstructed

society exhibits an almost comic ignorance of our limited powers of political calculation.

But I do not believe that these opinions are likely, either in reason or in fact, to weaken the springs of human effort. The best efforts of mankind have never been founded upon the belief in an assured progress towards a terrestrial millennium: if for no other reason because the belief itself is quite modern. Patriotism and public zeal have not in the past, and do not now, require any such aliment. True we do not know, as our fathers before us have not known, the hidden laws by which in any State the private virtues of its citizens, their love of knowledge, the energy and disinterestedness of their civic life, their reverence for the past, their caution, their capacity for safely working free institutions, may be maintained and fostered. But we *do* know that no State where these qualities have flourished has ever perished from internal decay; and we also know that it is within our power, each of us in his own sphere, to practise them ourselves, and to encourage them in others. As men of action, we want no more than this. Of this no speculation can deprive us. And I doubt whether any of us will be less fitted to face with a wise and cheerful courage the problems of our age and country, if reflection should induce us to rate somewhat lower than is at present fashionable, either the splendours of our future destiny, or the facility with which these splendours may be attained.

[*Extract 85 is taken from Mr. Balfour's Speech at the celebration of the Quincentenary of St. Andrews University, September 1911.]*

85. I now have the honour of addressing a great

international assembly. Learning is represented in this room from every country boasting Western civilisation, and in this we are carrying on, after all, the traditions of the great mediæval Universities. The mediæval Universities were an absolutely new product, owing nothing, so far as I am aware, to ancient tradition, to ancient organisation, to ancient methods of organisation ; and, from the beginning, they were international in their character. Learning was welcomed from every country in the world, every country that could attend irrespective of national jealousies, irrespective even of national hostilities. In the thirteenth century, as in the fourteenth, as in the fifteenth, when this University was established, the fact that a student even belonged to a hostile country was regarded as being no bar to his having all the advantages which a University could give. There is something, I think, splendid in this idea of a great international task to be carried on, in which all the nations of the world are equally interested, in which all sections of humanity, to whatever race they may belong, whatever religion they may profess, are all equally concerned ; and nothing could illustrate the greatness of this truth, or the nobility of that cause better than such an assembly as I now see before me. I hope, and I believe, that, as this common consciousness of a great intellectual task comes more and more home to the peoples of Europe, it will become more and more impossible for them to find themselves divided upon other questions, and that when the next 500 years pass over this University and when the Lord Rector of that day has to follow in the steps of my noble friend on my right (Lord Rosebery), it will regard international warfare and will speak of international warfare with the

same disgust, with the same moral disdain, with which Lord Rosebery speaks of mediæval Scotland.

What of those 500 years which are to come as compared with the 500 years which are past? It is very difficult to keep our ideals of temporal perspective in due proportion. I do not venture to prophesy; in fact I believe that the only prophecy that any self-respecting prophet would venture to make with regard to the coming period—the only prophecy as distinguished from the hope which might be expressed—is of a rather unpleasant kind, namely, that the material resources of the world will by that time, so far as we can judge, have not only diminished materially, but, in many parts of the world, not excluding these islands, some of the most important will be exhausted. Just consider how difficult it is to keep this proportion in mind. I have the great honour to be Chancellor of Edinburgh University. We regard Edinburgh University as the younger sister of St. Andrews'—after all not so very much younger; but the period that elapsed between the foundation of this University and the foundation of Edinburgh University, that period repeated from the present moment will see our coal supplies of these islands exhausted.

Let me turn from that which is not a pleasant reflection to another aspect, perhaps more nearly associated with academic life. What hopes—I venture on no prophecies now—what hopes may we have of the growth of learning? And here I should like, and I venture to strike a more cheerful note. I do not believe that we realise the magnitude of the growth of knowledge that has yet taken place in the three generations, in the sixty or ninety years drawing to a conclusion. I do not think we realise how great is that growth compared

with previous periods. Our whole view of the world has been revolutionised in that time—our whole view of history, our whole view of science, our whole conception of the material world, our whole knowledge of the growth of progress, of the development of mankind, and of the organic world of which man is but a part. Are we going—can we hope to go—at the same rate of progress during the next 500 years that has marked the growth of knowledge in the last thirty, sixty, or ninety years? If we can make any such prophecy, if we can entertain any such hope, what will be the position of our great-great-grandchildren, our remote descendants? How far will they have got on beyond the point which we with difficulty, with labour, but, surely, not without success, have been able to reach at the present time? Will they look back on us not merely in the way that we are justified in looking back to the great men of the Middle Ages? Will they feel progress has been as rapid as it has recently been? The difference between our knowledge and their knowledge in 500 years' time will be incomparably greater, without powers of measurement, greater than the difference that separates us from the great schoolmen of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. I hope it may be so.

I hope that our knowledge of nature and that our conquests over nature will go on at the same rate of growth as they have gone on in the years which are remembered by many of those whom I am addressing; and if that expectation be carried out, then it is impossible for us to form the slightest conjecture of what the world will be 100 years or 150 or 200 years hence. Whether these hopes are destined to fulfilment or whether after a great outburst of physical discovery which has, I

believe, exceptionally characterised recent years, whether after that there is to be a pause, a set-back, a period of quiescence, no man can tell. But after all, knowledge breeds knowledge, and the more you pursue your way into the secrets of nature, the more instruments are at your command for making yet further advances; and I see no reason to doubt that unless mankind mismanages its affairs in the grossest and most scandalous fashion, our descendants will be able to look back upon us as merely beginners and pioneers in the great field of discovery which is open to mankind. . . . [1911.]

## PUBLIC-SPEAKING

86. LORD SALVESEN did not exaggerate in the least the extraordinary loss of influence and power which attaches to those persons whose business and occupation in life require them to address assemblies of their fellow-men, who have mastered the material that they want to put before them, but apparently are incapable of avoiding such odd habits as dropping their voice at the end of a sentence, thus making what they say practically inaudible, and have never taken even the smallest amount of pains which is required to enable the average voice to reach the average audience. I associate myself entirely with the advice of Lord Salvesen in that respect. I hope you will not misinterpret me in the sense of thinking yourselves advantaged in the attempt to study what I call the arts of elocution, methods of gesture, of raising or lowering the voice to show emotion, the things which are taught by professors of elocution, but which are not, believe me, practised by any successful person. After all, public-speaking is, or ought to be, conversation raised to a higher level; and the one fatal defect, believe me—for I have lived amongst speakers all my life—the only defect which is fatal is that when he speaks to you he should give you an appearance of artificiality. It is that which lies behind the objection to which Lord Salvesen alluded—the objection to speeches learned by heart. Lord Salvesen was perfectly right in saying that a

subject properly learned by heart and properly delivered was the best of all speeches. No speech delivered impromptu could have the finish, the polish, the conciseness, the arrangement, which are the result of study, and which nothing but study can give. But the man who writes his speech, and then learns it, and then delivers it, so that every man knows he has written it—that man never will succeed as a speaker. I remember in one of Lord Brougham's letters reading an account which he himself gave of one of his own most successful pieces of oratory. He did not perhaps think he praised it, but the particular praise he gave himself on this occasion was to say part of his speech was impromptu, part was prepared and learned by heart, and the audience could not tell which was which. I do not know whether the praise was deserved, but it was very good praise. That shows that Lord Brougham was, what undoubtedly we all admit he was, a very great Parliamentary speaker; and even when he worked up particular passages of eloquence, of invective, to the highest points of which he was capable, he had the art of so delivering these to his audience that they did not see that they were prepared. But they fitted without a hitch, without a false joint, into the general fabric of a debating discourse. And further I would say, as Lord Salvesen has told you, that there is a necessity for elocution; but remember that while you are learning elocution you are learning it for the purpose of being able to be heard by the audience whom you want to persuade, to interest, or to amuse. Always have the audience and never yourself before your mind when you are making your speech.

[1907.]

unless he is capable of debating. In an assembly like the House of Commons, and I should suppose in a Law Court, the man who requires to retire and reflect, and write and learn by heart, before he can deal with the case presented by an opponent is a man whose capacity may be enormous, whose power of speech, whose command of eloquence, may be of the very highest order, but who cannot command them when wanted, who will therefore be perhaps surpassed in efficiency by some one of far smaller gifts than himself, provided those gifts are at command and can be used the moment they are desired. Therefore, I would recommend everybody to carry out the precepts which Lord Salvesen, himself a great master of the art, has so admirably put before you.

The two great qualifications which I would advise any struggling speaker to strive for are, in the first place, the art of getting in touch with his audience, and of forgetting himself in his desire to persuade and interest them ; and, in the second place, that readiness of resource and that command of language which, if it does not do justice, or some justice, to a great cause which more carefully prepared efforts can do, is nevertheless always at his command, and can be used at moments and on occasions when perhaps a more skilful orator is not ready, has not brought his guns into position, has not brought up his great columns, is incapable of marshalling his army to the full effect : the commander of smaller but readier and more mobile forces may thus find himself able to defeat battalions bigger than his own. These suggestions are not in any sense antagonistic to those which have been laid before you. The two gifts which I have suggested are, of course, worthless unless the speaker has got something to say, has got something which he has thought

before, something which is not the mere casual inspiration of the moment, but which wells out naturally from a mind stored with reflections, and which has gone over in some form or another all the ground which he is travelling in his speech.

But whatever value my observations may have, they are at all events founded on a close observation and acquaintance with speakers of all types of opinion and oratory. I have listened to men who could hardly put two sentences grammatically together, but who held the House of Commons because they persuaded the House of Commons by their personal magnetism and by their manner of speech that they knew what they were talking about. I have heard men like Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright—masters of their time—Mr. Gladstone above all the master of every skilful resource the orator could have at his disposal, and of whom I can only say I regret his speeches are of a kind that make it impossible for those who read them in any sense to judge of their excellence. Posterity must take it from us who heard with our own ears the extraordinary gifts of pathos, humour, invective, detailed exposition, of holding the audiences and interesting them in the most intricate and dry matters of administrative and financial detail: they must take it from us that these speeches had all these qualities. If you go and take down a volume of his speeches and read them, you will not believe what I tell you; but I am telling you the truth. It is not the speeches which read best which are the greatest speeches. I am not qualified to speak of Demosthenes and Cicero. But, at all events, of the eloquence which has held spellbound the assemblies of which I have been a member, I can truly say posterity cannot possibly judge of their merits

by a mere study of the words used. They must see the man, feel the magnetism of his presence, see his gestures, the flash of his eyes. Then, and then only, will they feel what the real essential is between public-speaking on the one hand, and even the most admirable and eloquent writing on the other. I do not say which is best. I personally put the writing far above the speaking. I should tell you the test of a speaker is the audience he addresses. There is no other judge: there is no appeal from that Court. And if you judge of the verdict that Court has given on the orators of our day, I would certainly put Mr. Gladstone far above those to whom it has been my good fortune to listen. . . . [1907.]

## READING

88. THE other object and end of education besides the augmentation of learning is the augmentation of enjoyment, and I am sure that this is a point of view too constantly lost sight of by those who take advantage of the merits of education. My own wonder is, if we took real evidence as to the advantages to the mass of the population of learning to read, what answer we should get. Of course, reading is a necessary means of carrying on business. What beyond that is the chief advantage that the masses of our fellow-creatures get by learning to read? I believe it is this: the first, and I think the least important, matter is the advantage of reading the newspapers. The other, and the most important, is the advantage of reading that species of literature which is commonly described as frivolous. You hear people denounce light reading, novels, travels, and books of adventure, and the like, and mourn that more serious use is not made of the opportunities which have been given them. And we are inundated with lists of a hundred books on which it is supposed the human race is henceforth, or for a certain time, to satisfy its intellectual habits. I myself have a shrewd suspicion that some of those literary gentlemen who have promulgated those lists of a hundred books are not themselves in the habit after a hard day's work of going home and reading *Æschylus* or *Paradise Lost*, and that when it comes to

the point they will be found taking up the last three-volume novel; and I am not at all sure that after a hard day's work they could be better employed. I think the kind of contempt which is poured upon the ordinary daily food on which people satisfy their literary appetite is most misplaced. . . . . [1886.]

89. Books are far more independent<sup>1</sup> of place, of time, and of surrounding circumstances than are the masterpieces of pictorial art. It is no doubt the case that your true bibliophile has a taste for rare editions and precious bindings which cannot be satisfied in a public library. His taste, I admit, cannot be made general or popular; but I entertain very grave doubts whether the collection of a book collector ever gives much satisfaction except to its possessor. We may all enjoy—I am speaking of course of collections of rare and unique editions, and of precious bindings by old masters in the art of binding—we may all enjoy other people's parks, other people's pictures, and other people's houses—very often, I think, we enjoy them more than their actual possessors, but I have never heard of a case, nor do I believe such a case exists, in which one book collector thoroughly enjoys the collection of another book collector. If he does derive satisfaction from it, I think it is rather because he comes to contemplate that his friend may die, or be ruined, that his collection may come to the hammer, and that he may ultimately become the possessor of one or two of these coveted treasures.

But putting aside the special taste for rare books, I think that libraries like the one in which I am now speaking do appeal, and may appeal, to the tastes of the

\* <sup>1</sup> i.e., so far as our enjoyment of them goes.

whole community. They are not limited, and ought not to be limited, to a few. One advantage of education is that every man, woman, and child in the country ought to be able to read; and to any one who can read there are open treasures of enjoyment and satisfaction which probably no other source of pleasure, be it artistic or whatever else you please, is able to confer. A great French writer once stated that he had never in his life undergone any personal trouble or affliction the thought of which he could not dissipate by half an hour's reading. I cannot promise the inhabitants of Hertford that their cares and troubles will, as doctors say, so quickly yield to treatment as that; and I entertain a suspicion that the French author I have alluded to either exaggerated in the passage, or else that his troubles were far lighter than those which ordinarily fall to the lot of humanity. Nevertheless, make what allowance we please for his opinion, the truth still remains, and will be testified to by every man who has acquired a taste for reading, that no more sovereign specific exists for dissipating the petty cares and troubles of life. And if we acquire—and recollect it is not an art easy of itself to acquire—but if we once acquire a universal curiosity into the history of mankind, into the constitution of the material universe in which we live, into the various phases of human activity, into the thoughts and beliefs by which men now long dead have been actuated in the past—if we once acquire this general and universal curiosity, we shall possess, I will not say a specific against sorrow, but certainly a specific against boredom. We obtain a power of putting our own small troubles and our own small cares in their proper place. We are able to see the history of mankind in something like its true perspective; and we not only gain the power of diverting our thoughts

from the small annoyances of the hour, but we gain further the inestimable gift of seeing how small, compared with the general sum of human interests, of human sufferings and of human joys, are the insignificant troubles which may happen to each individual one of us. Now, this is no small advantage to be gained from the habit of reading; but the habit of reading cannot be acquired by anybody who has not ready access to books, and ready access to many books, because the habit is of itself a habit of general curiosity, a habit of drawing your literary pleasure from no small or narrow source, a habit of spreading your interest over the whole interests which have ever influenced mankind so far as we can make ourselves acquainted with them; and thus it is that the small collection of books which a poor man is able to acquire for himself is not enough to meet the needs of the case. Therefore it is that I hail with satisfaction the establishment in this and other towns of Free Libraries like that which I see around us. . . . [1889.]

*[The remaining extracts are taken from the Address to St. Andrews University, December 1887, delivered by Mr. Balfour when Lord Rector.]*

90. Yet I am convinced that, for most persons, the views thus laid down by Mr. Harrison are wrong, and that what he describes, with characteristic vigour, as "an impotent voracity for desultory information" is in reality a most desirable, and a not too common form of mental appetite. I have no sympathy whatever with the horror he expresses at the "incessant accumulation of fresh books." I am never tempted to regret that Gutenberg<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1410-1468. Regarded as the inventor of movable types in printing.

was born into the world. I care not at all though the "cataract of printed stuff," as Mr. Harrison calls it, should flow and still flow on until the catalogues of our libraries should make libraries themselves. I am prepared, indeed, to express sympathy almost amounting to approbation for any one who would check all writing which was *not* intended for the printer. I pay no tribute of grateful admiration to those who have oppressed mankind with the dubious blessing of the penny post. But the ground of the distinction is plain. We are always obliged to read our letters, and are sometimes obliged to answer them. But who obliges us to wade through the piled-up lumber of an ancient library, or to skim more than we like off the frothy foolishness poured forth in ceaseless streams by our circulating libraries? Dead dunces do not importune us; Grub Street<sup>1</sup> does not ask for a reply by return of post. Even their living successors need hurt no one who possesses the very moderate degree of social courage required to make the admission that he has not read the last new novel or the current number of a fashionable magazine.

91. I have often heard of the individual whose excellent natural gifts have been so overloaded with huge masses of undigested and indigestible learning that they have had no chance of healthy development. But though I have often heard of this personage, I have never met him, and I believe him to be mythical. It is true, no doubt, that many learned people are dull: but there is no indication whatever that they are dull because they are learned. True dullness is seldom acquired; it is a natural grace, the manifestations of which, however modified by

<sup>1</sup> A centre of journalism in the eighteenth century, now defunct.

education, remain in substance the same. Fill a dull man to the brim with knowledge, and he will not become less dull, as the enthusiasts for education vainly imagine; but neither will he become duller, as Mr. Harrison appears to suppose. He will remain in essence what he always has been and always must have been. But whereas his dullness would, if left to itself, have been merely vacuous, it may have become, under careful cultivation, pretentious and pedantic.

I would further point out that, while there is no ground in experience for supposing that a keen interest in those facts which Mr. Harrison describes as "merely curious," has any stupefying effect upon the mind, or has any tendency to render it insensible to the higher things of literature and art, there is positive evidence that many of those who have most deeply felt the charm of these higher things have been consumed by that omnivorous appetite for knowledge which excites Mr. Harrison's especial indignation. Dr. Johnson, for instance, though deaf to some of the most delicate harmonies of verse, was, without question, a very great critic. Yet, in Dr. Johnson's opinion, literary history, which is for the most part composed of facts which Mr. Harrison would regard as insignificant, about authors whom he would regard as pernicious, was the most delightful of studies. Again, consider the case of Lord Macaulay. Lord Macaulay did everything Mr. Harrison says he ought not to have done. From youth to age he was continuously occupied in "gorging and enfeebling" his intellect by the unlimited consumption of every species of literature, from the masterpieces of the age of Pericles, to the latest rubbish from the circulating library. It is not told of him that his intellect suffered by the process; and, though it will hardly be

claimed for him that he was a great critic, none will deny that he possessed the keenest susceptibilities for literary excellence in many languages and in every form.

92. The pleasures of imagination derived from the best literary models, form without doubt the most exquisite portion of the enjoyment which we may extract from books ; but they do not in my opinion form the largest portion if we take into account mass as well as quality in our calculation. There is the literature which appeals to the imagination or the fancy, some stray specimens of which Mr. Harrison will permit us to peruse ; but is there not also the literature which satisfies the curiosity ? Is this vast storehouse of pleasure to be thrown hastily aside because many of the facts which it contains are alleged to be insignificant, because the appetite to which they minister is said to be morbid ? Consider a little. We are here dealing with one of the strongest intellectual impulses of rational beings. Animals, as a rule, trouble themselves but little about anything unless they want either to eat it or to run away with it. Interest in, and wonder at, the works of nature and the doings of man are products of civilisation, and excite emotions which do not diminish, but increase with increasing knowledge and cultivation. Feed them and they grow ; minister to them and they will greatly multiply. We hear much indeed of what is called “idle curiosity,” but I am loth to brand any form of curiosity as necessarily idle. Take, for example, one of the most singular, but, in this age, one of the most universal, forms in which it is accustomed to manifest itself : I mean that of an exhaustive study of the contents of the morning and evening papers. It is certainly remarkable that any person who has nothing to get by it

should destroy his eyesight and confuse his brain by a conscientious attempt to master the dull and doubtful details of the European diary daily transmitted to us by "Our Special Correspondent." But it must be remembered that this is only a somewhat unprofitable exercise of that disinterested love of knowledge which moves men to penetrate the Polar snows, to build up systems of philosophy, or to explore the secrets of the remotest heavens. It has in it the rudiments of infinite and varied delights. It *can* be turned, and it *should* be turned, into a curiosity for which nothing that has been done, or thought, or suffered, or believed, no law which governs the world of matter or the world of mind, can be wholly alien or uninteresting.

Truly it is a subject for astonishment that, instead of expanding to the utmost the employment of this pleasure-giving faculty, so many persons should set themselves to work to limit its exercise by all kinds of arbitrary regulations.

93. And if it be true that the desire of knowledge for the sake of knowledge was the animating motive of the great men who first wrested her secrets from Nature, why should it not also be enough for us, to whom it is not given to discover, but only to learn, as best we may, what has been discovered by others?

94. But what is this "little knowledge" which is supposed to be so dangerous? What is it "little" in relation to? If in relation to what there is to know, then all human knowledge is little. If in relation to what actually is known by somebody, then we must condemn as "dangerous" the knowledge which Archimedes possessed of

Mechanics, or Copernicus of Astronomy ; for a shilling primer and a few weeks' study will enable any student to outstrip in mere information some of the greatest teachers of the past. No doubt, that little knowledge which thinks itself to be great, may possibly be a dangerous, as it certainly is a most ridiculous, thing. We have all suffered under that eminently absurd individual who on the strength of one or two volumes, imperfectly apprehended by himself, and long discredited in the estimation of every one else, is prepared to supply you on the shortest notice, with a dogmatic solution of every problem suggested by this "unintelligible world"; or the political variety of the same pernicious genus, whose statecraft consists in the ready application to the most complex question of national interest of some high-sounding commonplace<sup>1</sup> which has done weary duty on a thousand platforms, and which even in its palmiest days was never fit for anything better than a peroration. But in our dislike of the individual do not let us mistake the diagnosis of his disease. He suffers not from ignorance<sup>2</sup> but from stupidity. Give him learning and you make him not wise, but only more pretentious in his folly.

I say then that so far from a little knowledge being undesirable, a little knowledge is all that on most subjects any of us can hope to attain, and that, as a source not of worldly profit but of personal pleasure, it may be of incalculable value to its possessor. But it will naturally be asked, "How are we to select from among the infinite number of things which may be known those which it is best worth while for us to know?" We are constantly being told to concern ourselves with learning what is important, and not to waste our energies upon what is

<sup>1</sup> General proposition.

<sup>2</sup> Little knowledge.

insignificant. But what are the marks by which we shall recognise the important, and how is it to be distinguished from the insignificant? A precise and complete answer to this question which shall be true for all men cannot be given. I am considering knowledge, recollect, as it ministers to enjoyment, and from this point of view each unit of information is obviously of importance in proportion as it increases the general sum of enjoyment which we obtain, or expect to obtain, from knowledge. This, of course, makes it impossible to lay down precise rules which shall be an equally sure guide to all sorts and conditions of men; for in this, as in other matters, tastes must differ, and against real difference of taste there is no appeal. There is, however, one caution which it may be worth your while to keep in view—Do not be persuaded into applying any general proposition on this subject with a foolish impartiality to every kind of knowledge.

95. It is no doubt true that we are surrounded by advisers who tell us that all study of the past is barren except in so far as it enables us to determine the principles by which the evolution of human societies is governed. How far such an investigation has been up to the present time fruitful in results it would be unkind to inquire. That it will ever enable us to trace with accuracy the course which states and nations are destined to pursue in the future, or to account in detail for their history in the past, I do not in the least believe. We are borne along like travellers on some unexplored stream. We may know enough of the general configuration of the globe to be sure that we are making our way towards the ocean. We may know enough, by experience or theory, of the laws regulating the flow of liquids, to conjecture

how the river will behave under the varying influences to which it may be subject. More than this we cannot know. It will depend largely upon causes which, in relation to any laws which we are ever likely to discover, may properly be called accidental, whether we are destined sluggishly to drift among fever-stricken swamps, to hurry down perilous rapids, or to glide gently through fair scenes of peaceful cultivation.

But leaving on one side ambitious sociological speculations, and even those more modest but hitherto more successful investigations into the causes which have in particular cases been principally operative in producing great political changes, there are still two modes in which we can derive what I may call "spectacular" enjoyment from the study of history. There is first the pleasure which arises from the contemplation of some great historic drama, or some broad and well-marked phase of social development. The story of the rise, greatness, and decay of a nation is like some vast epic which contains as subsidiary episodes the varied stories of the rise, greatness, and decay of creeds, of parties, and of statesmen. The imagination is moved by the slow unrolling of this great picture of human mutability, as it is moved by the contrasting permanence of the abiding stars. The ceaseless conflict, the strange echoes of long-forgotten controversies, the confusion of purpose, the successes in which lay deep the seeds of future evils, the failures that ultimately divert the otherwise inevitable danger, the heroism which struggles to the last for a cause foredoomed to defeat, the wickedness which sides with right, and the wisdom which huzzas at the triumph of folly—fate, meanwhile, amidst this turmoil and perplexity, working silently towards the predestined end—all these form

together a subject the contemplation of which need surely never weary.

96. The best method of guarding against the danger of reading what is useless is to read only what is interesting. A truth which will seem a paradox to a whole class of readers, fitting objects of our commiseration, who may be often recognised by their habit of asking some adviser for a list of books, and then marking out a scheme of study in the course of which all are to be conscientiously perused. These unfortunate persons apparently read a book principally with the object of getting to the end of it. They reach the word *Finis* with the same sensation of triumph as an Indian feels who strings a fresh scalp to his girdle. They are not happy unless they mark by some definite performance each step in the weary path of self-improvement. To begin a volume and not to finish it would be to deprive themselves of this satisfaction ; it would be to lose all the reward of their earlier self-denial by a lapse from virtue at the end. To skip, according to their literary code, is a species of cheating ; it is a mode of obtaining credit for erudition on false pretences ; a plan by which the advantages of learning are surreptitiously obtained by those who have not won them by honest toil. But all this is quite wrong. In matters literary, works<sup>1</sup> have no saving efficacy. He has only half-learnt the art of reading who has not added to it the even more refined accomplishments of skipping and of skimming ; and the first step has hardly been taken in the direction of making literature a pleasure until interest

<sup>1</sup> There is a reference here to the theological controversy as to the efficacy of good works and of faith respectively to procure salvation. The labour of reading is compared to good works.

in the subject, and not a desire to spare (so to speak) the author's feelings, or to accomplish an appointed task, is the prevailing motive of the reader.

97. I am deliberately of opinion that it is the pleasures and not the profits, spiritual or temporal, of literature which most require to be preached in the ear of the ordinary reader. I hold, indeed, the faith that all such pleasures minister to the development of much that is best in man—mental and moral; but the charm is broken and the object lost if the remote consequence is consciously pursued to the exclusion of the immediate end. It will not, I suppose, be denied that the beauties of nature are at least as well qualified to minister to our higher needs as are the beauties of literature. Yet we do not say we are going to walk to the top of such and such a hill in order to drink in "spiritual sustenance." We say we are going to look at the view. And I am convinced that this, which is the natural and simple way of considering literature as well as nature, is also the true way.

98. It is perfectly possible for a man, not a professed student, and who only gives to reading the leisure hours of a business life, to acquire such a general knowledge of the laws of nature and the facts of history that every great advance made in either department shall be to him both intelligible and interesting; and he may besides have among his familiar friends many a departed worthy whose memory is embalmed in the pages of memoir or biography. All this is ours for the asking. All this we shall ask for if only it be our happy fortune to love for its own sake the beauty and the knowledge to be

gathered from books. And if this be our fortune, the world may be kind or unkind, it may seem to us to be hastening on the wings of enlightenment and progress to an imminent millennium, or it may weigh us down with the sense of insoluble difficulty and irremediable wrong; but whatever else it be, so long as we have good health and a good library, it can hardly be dull.

## SIR WALTER SCOTT

99. If we can hardly expect that the author of *Sartor Resartus* and of the *French Revolution*<sup>1</sup> should be a popular favourite and popular friend in the same sense that Burns was and is a popular friend, the case is not so easy when we come to Sir Walter Scott; for Sir Walter Scott was not only one of the greatest men of letters who have ever lived in any country, but he was also one of the best and most lovable of men who have ever adorned any society. And as time goes on, so far from his fame becoming dimmed or the knowledge of him becoming the property only of the few, it seems to me, so far as I can judge, that he is more likely to defy the ravages of time than almost any other of the writers who have adorned the present century . . . [1897.]

100. Sir Walter Scott was not only a great poet and a great novelist, but, even apart from his originality as an author of creative imagination, he was a man of letters of no small magnitude. He would have had a place—a comparatively humble place, it may be, but still a recognised and a permanent place—among those who have interested themselves in the progress of English literature, even had he never written a single line of original verse or been the author of one of the immortal novels which have made his name famous throughout the

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Carlyle.

world. Of course, it is as a novelist that Scott specially lives in the hearts of his countrymen, and as a novelist he has undoubtedly the greatest claim upon those who profess to be interested in literature. . . . [1897.]

101. The chairman has already indicated to you the justification by which I take part in the ceremony of this afternoon. He has called upon me to speak as a Scotchman and as one who was born and has lived in those regions from which Sir Walter Scott drew his inspiration, which gave the early bent to his genius, and which provided so large a material which that genius worked up into immortal stories. And yet, though Scott was essentially a Scotchman—by which I mean that his inspiration was drawn from the place of his birth and the surroundings of his childhood—we are not here simply, or even principally, to celebrate the memory of a Scotchman, but of a man of letters whose works are the heritage of the whole English-speaking race throughout the world, and who had an almost unique position even during his own lifetime upon the Continent of Europe among men of letters speaking another language than his own.

In truth, in this last respect I do not know that any English man of letters, except perhaps Byron, and Richardson the novelist, has during his own lifetime produced so great and so direct an effect upon the course of literature in other countries. It would be a curious and interesting subject of speculation, were this the time to indulge in it, to analyse the causes by which this rather peculiar result was obtained. I do not put it before you as any special mark of great literary distinction. I would only say that, if Scott possessed it, it was

no doubt in part due to the fact that his great merits did not turn upon delicacies of style inappreciable even by the most accurate foreign students of our literature, but that his merit depended upon broader effects and greater issues which all were capable of understanding. I must not be supposed in these words to imply that I join myself to that mistaken band of critics—mistaken as I think them—who tell you that Scott's style ought not to be a subject of literary admiration. I take a very different view. It is true that it was always hasty, and sometimes careless; but for his purposes—the purposes which he had in view and the ends which he desired to serve—the style was admirable, and admirably married to the matter which it had to put into literary shape and to which it had to give literary currency. Yet it must be so far admitted that the merits of his style are not particularly his claim to the affectionate admiration of late posterity; that depends upon greater and larger things. In what, then, did Scott's greatness permanently consist? His greatness was due, I venture to think, to the same general cause to which all greatness is due—namely, the coincidence of special and exceptional gifts with those special and exceptional opportunities in which those gifts may have the greatest and the freest play. He reached his literary maturity when the reaction against the eighteenth century was at its height. That reaction had already acquired the domain of poetry. It had made large advances in the glorious domain of politics.

The historical movement,<sup>1</sup> which has so greatly distinguished the nineteenth century, had already shown its first fruitful beginnings, and of that historical movement Scott was the artistic representative. I do not,

<sup>1</sup> See lines 13-16, p. 183.

of course, mean to say that Scott's history was always accurate history. He took many liberties—some intentional, others unintentional—with the history of the many various periods with which he dealt and which he used as artistic material. But Sir Walter Scott had, as no man before him has ever had, and no man who comes after is ever likely to have, the power of conceiving, and making live, characters in the historic past, and making those characters organic elements in<sup>1</sup> the historic setting in which he had placed them. The eighteenth century delighted in the abstract<sup>2</sup> man, abstract institutions. Scott gave artistic expression to the more modern, the more concrete,<sup>3</sup> and the more fruitful view which sees all institutions as the growth of an historic past, and all individuals as the creatures and the creations of the age in which they were formed; and he, and he alone, had the power of making his creations not only the vehicle for antiquarian learning, but living representatives of a long dead past—representatives the characters of which his genius was able to read. in the romantic stories which are our delight, were the delight of our forefathers, and will long be the delight of the generations which will come afterwards. I am told, indeed, that the present generation do not read Scott. That is not a subject upon which I can speak with authority. Still, of course, nobody pretends that Scott has broken loose, or can break loose, from that law to which every literary author is subjected; but, while nobody pretends that his works alone, of all works of genius, are free from the limits of fashion, it still remains a fact, as far as I can judge, that the pleasure which his page still gives, not merely to the man of letters by profession, not merely to the student

<sup>1</sup> Part and parcel of.

<sup>2</sup> Ideal.

<sup>3</sup> Realistic.

of literary history, but to the generally cultivated public, is undiminished, and has stood, as very few works have been able to stand, the test of time.

It may perhaps be thought that the ceremony in which we are assembled here to take part has been too long deferred. Two generations have passed since Scott sank to his rest, and it might well seem that long before the present occasion some memorial should have been raised to his memory, that he should have found his place among his great literary predecessors. The Dean has explained how this came about, and I would add that, speaking for myself, I can hardly regret the delay. Memorials are of two kinds. The most common kind—the one with which we all have sympathy—consists in the pathetic effort to preserve some recollection of a man who has done good work in his generation, to preserve something of his memory to an age and a period when that work, though not fruitless, may yet probably be forgotten. In this unequal struggle with oblivion many of us have probably taken part on other occasions. But there is another kind of memorial, of which this is one, in which we pretend not to do anything to preserve a memory which will last without our efforts, or to add to a fame which has reached its maturity and is likely to remain whether we take part in proclaiming it or leave it alone. We are here to-day, not to add to Scott's fame, not to do that for him which he has done for himself—namely, to make succeeding generations of his own countrymen honour his memory—but to satisfy the need which we ourselves feel of placing the bust of one of the greatest literary men whom this island has ever produced amid the great galaxy of talent and genius enshrined within the walls of this historic building. Surely none

has left a character more lovable, a character which gains more the more it is known, and which now, more than sixty years after his death, has won for him not merely admirers, but intimate and loving friends. And as his character stands out in its broad outlines of humanity above all, or almost all, of those with whom it will be associated within the Abbey, so, I think, we may claim for him that none of those have exceeded him in genius, none of those have been more richly endowed with the gifts of imagination than he was, and none has made a better use of his unique inspiration for the benefit and for the happiness of his own and succeeding generations.

[1897.]

## TRIBUTES TO HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA AND HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD THE SEVENTH

### HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA

102. THE history of this House is not a brief or an uneventful one, but I think it has never met in sadder circumstances than to-day, or had the melancholy duty laid more clearly upon it of expressing a universal sorrow —a sorrow extending from one end of the Empire to the other, a sorrow which fills every heart and which every citizen feels, not merely as a national, but also as a personal loss. I do not know how it may seem to others, but, for my own part, I can hardly yet realise the magnitude of the blow which has fallen upon the country--a blow, indeed, sorrowfully expected, but not, on that account, less heavy when it falls. I suppose that, in all the history of the British Monarchy, there never has been a case in which the feeling of national grief was so deep-seated as it is at present, so universal, so spontaneous. And that grief affects us not merely because we have lost a great personality, but because we feel that the end of a great epoch has come upon us —an epoch the beginning of which stretches beyond the memory, I suppose, of any individual whom I am now addressing, and which embraces with its compass sixty-three years, more important, more crowded with

epoch-making change, than almost any other period of like length that could be selected in the history of the world. It is wonderful to reflect that, before these great changes, now familiar and almost vulgarised by constant discussion, were thought of or developed—great industrial inventions, great economic changes, great discoveries in science which are now in all men's mouths—Queen Victoria reigned over this Empire. Yet, Sir,<sup>1</sup> it is not this reflection, striking though it be, which now moves us most deeply. It is not simply the length of the reign, it is not simply the magnitude of the events with which that reign is filled, which have produced the deep and abiding emotion which stirs every heart throughout this kingdom. The reign of Queen Victoria is no mere chronological landmark. It is no mere convenient division of time, useful to the historian or the chronicler. No, Sir, we feel as we do feel for our great loss because we intimately associate the personality of Queen Victoria with the great succession of events which have filled her reign, with the growth, moral and material, of the Empire over which she ruled. And, in so doing, surely we do well. In my judgment, the importance of the Crown in our Constitution is not a diminishing, but an increasing factor. It increases, and must increase with the development of those free, self-governing communities, those new commonwealths beyond the sea, who are constitutionally linked to us through the person of the Sovereign, the living symbol of Imperial unity. But, Sir, it is not given, it cannot, in ordinary course, be given, to a constitutional Monarch to signalise his reign by any great isolated action. His influence, great as it may be, can only be produced by the slow, constant, and

<sup>1</sup> The Speaker of the House of Commons.

cumulative results of a great ideal and a great example; and in presenting effectively that great ideal and that great example to her people, Queen Victoria surely was the first of all constitutional Monarchs whom the world has yet seen. Where shall we find any ideal so lofty in itself, so constantly and consistently maintained, through two generations, through more than two generations, of her subjects, through many generations of her Ministers and public men?

Sir, it would be almost impertinent for me were I to attempt to express to the House in words the effect which the character of our late Sovereign produced upon all who were in any degree, however remote, brought in contact with her. In the simple dignity, befitting a Monarch of this realm, she could never fail, because it arose from her inherent sense of the fitness of things. And because it was no artificial ornament of office, because it was natural and inevitable, this queenly dignity only served to throw into a stronger relief, into a brighter light, those admirable virtues of the wife, the mother, and the woman, with which she was so richly endowed. Those kindly graces, those admirable qualities, have endeared her to every class in the community, and are known to all. Perhaps less known was the life of continuous labour which her position as Queen threw upon her. Short as was the interval between the last trembling signature affixed to a public document and the final and perfect rest, it was yet long enough to clog and hamper the wheels of administration; and when I saw the accumulating mass of untouched documents which awaited the attention of the Sovereign, I marvelled at the unostentatious patience which for sixty-three years, through sorrow, through suffering, in moments

of weariness, in moments of despondency, had enabled her to carry on without break or pause her share in the government of this great Empire. For her there was no holiday, to her there was no intermission of toil. Domestic sorrow, domestic sickness, made no difference in her labours, and they were continued from the hour at which she became our Sovereign to within a few days—I had almost said a few hours—of her death. It is easy to chronicle the growth of Empire, the course of discovery, the progress of trade, the triumphs of war, all the events that make history interesting or exciting; but who is there that will dare to weigh in the balance the effect which such an example, continued over sixty-three years, has produced on the highest life of her people?

It was a great life, and surely it had a happy ending. She found her reward in the undying affection and the passionate devotion of all her subjects, wheresoever their lot might be cast. This has not always been the fate of her ancestors. It has not been the fate of some of the greatest among them. It has been their less happy destiny to outlive contemporary fame, to see their people's love grow cold, to find new generations growing up who know them not, and burdens to be lifted too heavy for their aged arms. Their sun, once so bright, has set amid darkening clouds and the muttering of threatening tempests. Such was not the lot of Queen Victoria. She passed away with her children and her children's children, to the third generation, around her, beloved and cherished of all. She passed away without, I well believe, a single enemy in the world—for even those who loved not England loved her; and she passed away not only knowing that she was—I had almost said adored by her people, but that their feelings towards her had

grown in depth and intensity with every year in which she was spared to rule over them. No such reign, no such ending, can the history of this country show us.

Mr. Speaker, the Message from the King which you have read from the Chair calls forth, according to the immemorial usage of this House, a double response. We condole with His Majesty upon the irreparable loss which he and the country have sustained. We congratulate him upon his accession to the ancient dignities of his House. I suppose at this moment there is no sadder heart in this kingdom than that of its Sovereign ; and it may seem, therefore, to savour of bitter irony that we should offer him on such a melancholy occasion the congratulations of his people. Yet, Sir, it is not so. Each generation must bear its own burdens ; and in the course of nature it is right that the burden of Monarchy should fall upon the heir to the Throne. He is therefore to be congratulated, as every man is to be congratulated, who, in obedience to plain duty, takes upon himself the weight of great responsibilities, filled with the earnest hope of worthily fulfilling his task to the end, or, in his own words, "while life shall last." It is for us on this occasion, so momentous in the history of the Monarchy, so momentous in the history of the King, to express to him our unfailing confidence that the great interests committed to his charge are safe in his keeping, to assure him of the ungrudging support which his loyal subjects are ever prepared to give him, to wish him honour, to wish him long life, to wish him the greatest of all blessings, the blessings of reigning over a happy and contented people, and to wish, above all, that his reign may, in the eyes of an envious posterity, fitly compare with that great epoch which has just drawn to a close. Mr. Speaker, I now beg to read

the Address which I shall ask you to put from the Chair, and to which I shall ask the House to assent. I move—

“ That a humble Address be presented to His Majesty, to assure His Majesty that this House deeply sympathises in the great sorrow which His Majesty has sustained by the death of our beloved Sovereign, the late Queen, whose unfailing devotion to the duties of Her high estate and to the welfare of Her people will ever cause Her reign to be remembered with reverence and affection; to submit to His Majesty our respectful congratulations on His Accession to the Throne; to assure His Majesty of our loyal attachment to His person; and further to assure Him of our earnest conviction that His reign will be distinguished under the blessing of Providence by an anxious desire to maintain the Laws of the Kingdom, and to promote the happiness and liberty of His subjects.” . . . . . [1901.]

#### HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD THE SEVENTH

103. Twice in ten years we have been assembled on the saddest and most moving occasion which can call the representatives of the Commons together. I do not think anything which any of us can remember can exceed in its pathos the sudden grief which has befallen the whole of the community within these islands and the whole of the Empire of which these islands are the centre, and which has found an echo in every civilised nation in the world. I do not think that the deep feelings which move us all are accounted for merely by our sense of the great public loss which this nation has sustained, nor of the tragic circumstances by which that great loss has been accompanied. There are far deeper feelings moved in

us all than any based merely upon the careful weighing of public gains and public losses, for all of us feel that we have lost one who loved us, and who desired to serve the people whom we represent; and we have lost one with regard to whom we separately and individually feel a personal affection, in addition to our respectful loyalty. I have often wondered at the depth of the personal feeling of affection and devotion which it is possible for a Sovereign, circumstanced as our Sovereigns are, to excite among those over whom they reign.

It is easy for those who, like the Prime Minister and myself and many others, have been brought into personal contact with the late King, to appreciate his kindness, his readiness to understand the difficulties of those who were endeavouring to serve him, the unfailing tact and all the admirable qualities which the Prime Minister has so eloquently described. But, Sir, when I ask myself who of the great community over which King Edward ruled could feel as those felt who were brought into immediate contact with him, then I say it is due, and can only be due, to some incommunicable and unanalysable power of genius which enabled the King, by the perfect simplicity of his personality, to make all men love him and understand him.

Sir, genius keeps its counsels,<sup>1</sup> and I think no mere attempt of analysing character, no weighing of merits, no attempt to catalogue great gifts really touches the root of that great secret which made King Edward one of the most beloved monarchs that ever ruled over this great Empire. This power of communicating with all mankind, this power of bringing them into sympathy is surely the most kingly of all qualities, the one most valuable in a

<sup>1</sup> Secret.

Sovereign. The duties of kingship are not becoming easier as time goes on, while, as I think, they are also becoming, under the conditions of modern Empire, even more necessary to the health, and even to the existence, of the State. The King has few or none of the powers of explaining and communicating himself by ordinary channels to those over whom he rules. In these democratic days we all of us spend our lives in explaining. The King cannot; he has no opportunity such as we possess of laying his views before the judgment seat of public opinion. And, Sir, while those are difficulties which nobody who thinks over them will be inclined to undervalue, I think it is becoming more and more apparent to everybody who considers the circumstances of this great Empire, that our Sovereign, the Monarch of this country, is one of its most valued possessions. For what are we in these islands? We are part of an Empire which in one Continent is the heir of great Oriental monarchies, in other Continents is one of a brotherhood of democracies; and of this strangely-compacted whole the Sovereign, the hereditary Sovereign of Great Britain, is the embodiment, and the only embodiment of Imperial unity. He it is to whom all eyes from across the ocean look as the embodiment of their Imperial ideal, while we, the politicians of the hour, are but dim and shadowy figures to our fellow-subjects in other lands. While they but half-understand our controversies, and but imperfectly appreciate or realise our characteristics, the Monarch, the Constitutional Monarch, of this great Empire is the sign and symbol that we are all united together as one Empire to carry out great and common interests. The burden, therefore, which is thrown upon the Sovereign, could never have been foreseen by our forefathers before this

Empire came into being, and I think that even we ourselves at this very moment, and at this late state of Imperial development, are only half beginning to understand its vital importance. Sir, if I am right in what I have said (and I think I am), these marvellous gifts which King Edward possessed, are, as I have said, the great kingly qualities which we most desire to see in our Monarch ; and he used them to the utmost and to the full, as the Prime Minister has told us, and they had their effect not merely among his subjects wherever they might dwell, but also among people belonging to other nations, our neighbours—happily our friends—in other countries.

Sir, there have been, I think, strange misunderstandings with regard to the relation of the great King who has just departed, with the administration of our foreign affairs. There are people who suppose he took upon himself duties commonly left to his servants, and that when the secrets of diplomacy are revealed to the historian it will be found that he took a part not known, but half-suspected, in the transactions of his reign. Sir, that is to belittle the King ; it is not to pay him the tribute which in this connection he so greatly deserves. We must not think of him as a dexterous diplomatist—he was a great Monarch ; and it was because he was able naturally, simply through the incommunicable gift of personality, to make all feel, to embody for all men, the friendly policy of this country, that he was able to do a work in the bringing together of nations which has fallen to the lot of few men, be they kings, or be they subjects, to accomplish. He did what no Minister, no Cabinet, no Ambassadors, neither treaties, nor protocols, nor understandings, no debates, no banquets, and no speeches were able to perform. He, by his per-

sonality, and by his personality alone, brought home to the minds of millions on the Continent, as nothing we could have done would have brought home to them, the friendly feeling of the country over which King Edward ruled. He has gone. He has gone in the plenitude of his powers, in the noon tide of his popularity, in the ripeness of his experience. He has gone, but he will never be absent either from the memory or the affections of those who were his subjects. He has gone, but the Empire remains; and the burden which he so nobly bore now falls to another to sustain.

It is right that we at the beginning of the reign, conscious of what the labours, difficulties, and responsibilities of a Constitutional Monarch are, it is right that we should go forward, and, in words such as those which have been read from the Chair, assure King George of that loyal support and affection which we and the nation whom we represent unvaryingly gave to his father, and which will still most assuredly not be withheld from him. He brings to the great task which has thus been unexpectedly thrust upon him the greatest of all qualities—the qualities of deep-rooted patriotism and love for that Empire of which he is called upon to be the head, and the earnest desire he has constantly shown to do his duty. These are virtues which neither the country nor the House will be slow to appreciate. We may look forward in his person to finding again that great exemplar of constitutional monarchy of which his two great predecessors have given such illustrious examples.

The Prime Minister has referred to another Resolution which you, Sir, have not yet put, and which touches on a matter almost too sacred for public speech, but our

hearts are so full of deep sympathy for the bereaved lady, the Queen-Mother, that we cannot withhold some public form of expression of it on an occasion like the present. The Queen-Mother has been adored by the people of this country ever since she came<sup>1</sup> amongst us. She was adored by them in the heyday of youth and prosperity, and she may be well assured that in these days of adversity the affection and respect of the people of this country will gain rather than diminish in strength. We are surely right in laying before her a tribute of our deep sympathy. We know, or we can guess, how much she has felt. We know how irremediable is her grief, and in that grief she will ever have the warmest sympathy and affection both of this House and of those whom this House represents. . . . . [1910.]

<sup>1</sup> From Denmark, in 1863.

## TRIBUTE TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

104. MR. LOWTHER,<sup>1</sup> it is now seventeen years and more since a Minister rose in his place to discharge the melancholy duty which now devolves upon me. It then fell to the survivor of two great contemporaries, divided in political opinion, opposed to each other for more than a generation, separated it may be even more conclusively by differences of temperament, to propose a national memorial of the other.<sup>2</sup> The task which then fell to Mr. Gladstone was one of infinite difficulty, for he had to propose an address similar to that which you, Sir, will shortly read from the Chair, at a time when the controversies which had just been ended by death were still living in the immediate recollection of his audience, before the dust of battle had had time to sink, and when the noise of it was still in every ear. How Mr. Gladstone performed that delicate duty is in the memory of all who heard him, and I am only glad to think that, difficult as is the task which I have to perform to-day, impossible, indeed, from certain aspects, at all events the difficulties with which he had to contend do not beset my path. No persuasion need be exercised by me in inducing even the most scrupulous to join in an Address which we shall, I believe, unanimously vote this afternoon,

<sup>1</sup> Then Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons; now Speaker.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, died 1881.

for all feel that the great career which has just drawn to its close is a career already in large part a matter of history, and none of us will find even a momentary difficulty in forgetting any of the controversial aspects of his life, even though we ourselves may to some extent have been involved in them.

I have said that Mr. Gladstone's great career is already in large part and to the vast majority of this House a matter of history; and is it not so? He was Cabinet Minister before most of us were born; I believe there is in this House at the present time but one man who served under Mr. Gladstone in the first Cabinet over which he presided as Prime Minister; and even Members of the House not colleagues of Mr. Gladstone who were Members of the Parliament of 1868 to 1874—even those form now but a small and ever-dwindling band. This is not the place, nor this the occasion, on which to attempt any estimate of such a career; a career which began on the morrow of the first Reform Bill, which lasted for two generations, and which, so far as politics were concerned, was brought to a close a few years ago, during a fourth tenure of office as Prime Minister. But, Sir, during those two generations, during those sixty years, this country went through a series of changes, revolutionary in amount, if not by procedure, changes scientific, changes theological, changes social, changes political. In all these phases of contemporary evolution Mr. Gladstone took the liveliest interest. All of them he watched closely; in many of them he took a part—in some of them the part he took was supreme, that of a governing and guiding influence. Sir, how is it possible for us on the present occasion to form an estimate of a life so complex—a life so little to be measured by a purely

political standard, a life so rich in results outside the work of this House, the work of Party politics, the work of Imperial Administration—how is it possible, I say, for any man to pretend to exhaust the many-sided aspects of such a life even on such an occasion as this?

Sir, I feel myself unequal even to dealing with what is perhaps more strictly germane to this Address—I mean, Mr. Gladstone as a politician, as a Minister, as a leader of public thought, as an eminent servant of the Queen; and if I venture to say anything to the House, it is rather of Mr. Gladstone as the greatest member of the greatest deliberative assembly which, so far, the world has seen, that I would wish to speak. Sir, I think it is the language of sober and of unexaggerated truth to say that there is no gift which would enable a man to move, to influence, to adorn an assembly like this that Mr. Gladstone did not possess in a supereminent degree. Debaters as ready there may have been, orators as finished; it may have been given to others to sway as skilfully this critical assembly, or to appeal with as much directness and force to the simple instincts of the great masses of our countrymen: but, Sir, it has been given to no man to combine all those great gifts as they were combined in the person of Mr. Gladstone. From the conversational discussion appropriate to our work in Committee, to the most sustained eloquence befitting some high argument and some great historic occasion, every weapon of Parliamentary warfare was wielded by him with the sureness and the ease of perfect, absolute, and complete mastery. I would not venture myself to pronounce an opinion as to whether he was most excellent in the exposition of some complicated project of finance or legislation, or whether he shone most in the heat of extempore debate. At least this

we may say, that from the humbler arts of ridicule or invective to the subtlest dialectic, the most persuasive eloquence, the most moving appeals to everything that was highest and best in the audience he was addressing—every instrument which could find place in the armoury of a Member of this House he had at his command without premeditation, without forethought, at the moment, and in the form which was best suited to carry out his purpose.

I suppose each one of us who has had the good fortune to be able to watch any part of that wonderful career must have in mind some particular example which seems to him to embody the greatest excellences of this most excellent member of Parliament. Sir, the scene which comes back to my mind is one relating to an outworn and half-forgotten controversy now more than twenty years past, in which, as it happened, Mr. Gladstone was placed in the most difficult position which it is possible for a man to occupy—a position in which he finds himself opposed to the united and vigorous forces of his ordinary opponents, but does not happen at the moment to have behind him more than the hesitating sympathy or the veiled opposition of his friends. On this particular occasion I remember there occurred one of those preliminary debates which preceded the main business of the evening. In these Mr. Gladstone had to speak, not once, nor twice only, but several times, and it was not until hour after hour had passed in this preliminary skirmishing that, to a House hostile, impatient, and utterly weary, he rose to present his case with that unhesitating conviction in the righteousness of his cause, which was his great strength as a speaker in and out of this House. I never, Sir, shall forget the impression that that scene left on my mind.

As a mere feat of physical endurance it was unsurpassed ; as a feat of Parliamentary courage, of Parliamentary skill, of Parliamentary endurance, and Parliamentary eloquence, I believe that it was almost unique. Alas ! let no man hope to be able to reconstruct from our records any living likeness of these great works of genius. The words, indeed, are there, lying side by side with the words of lesser men in an equality as if of death ; but the spirit, the fire, the inspiration has gone, and he who could alone revive them—he who could alone show us what these works really were, by reproducing their like—he, alas ! has now gone from us for ever. Posterity must take it on our testimony what he was to those, friends or foes, whose fortune it was to be able to hear him. We who thus heard him know that, though our days be prolonged, and though it may be our fortune to see the dawn or even the meridian of other men destined to illustrate this House and do great and glorious service to their Sovereign and their country, we shall never again in this Assembly see any man who can reproduce for us what Mr. Gladstone was—who can show to those who never heard him how much they have lost.

It may, perhaps, Sir, be asked whether I have nothing to say about Mr. Gladstone's work as a statesman, about the judgment we ought to pass upon the part which he has played in the history of his country and the history of the world during the many years in which he held the foremost place in this Assembly. These questions are legitimate questions. But they are not to be discussed by me to-day. Nor, indeed, do I think that the final answer can be given to them—the final judgment pronounced—in the course of this generation. But one service he did—in my opinion incalculable—which is altogether apart

from the verdicts which we may be disposed to pass upon particular opinions or particular lines of policy which Mr. Gladstone may from time to time have adopted. Sir, he added a dignity, and he added a weight, to the deliberations of this House by his genius, for which I think it is impossible to be sufficiently grateful. It is not enough for us simply to keep up a level, though it be a high level, of probity and of patriotism. The mere average of civic virtue is not sufficient to preserve this Assembly from the fate which has overtaken so many other assemblies like us—the products of democratic forces. More than this is required, more than this was given to us by Mr. Gladstone. He brought to our debates a genius which raised in the general estimation the whole level of our proceedings; and they will be the most ready to admit the infinite value of this service who realise how much of public well-being is involved in maintaining the dignity and interest of public life, how perilously difficult most democracies apparently find it to avoid the opposite dangers into which so many of them have fallen. Sir, that is a consideration which, perhaps, has not occurred to persons unfamiliar with our debates, or unwatchful of the course of contemporary thought; but to me it seems that it places the services of Mr. Gladstone to this Assembly, which he loved so well, and of which he was so great an ornament, in as clear a light and on as firm a basis as it is perhaps possible to place them.

In drawing the terms of the Address which will shortly be read from the Chair we have thought it our duty—and in that, at all events, we know that we are pursuing the course which Mr. Gladstone himself would most earnestly have approved—to adhere closely to former precedent. Not one phrase in this Address is there

which has not at least on one occasion been employed by this House when it was doing honour to some of the greatest of Mr. Gladstone's predecessors. But surely these consecrated phrases never have received a happier application than they have in the case of the great statesman whose loss we are lamenting. We talk of the "admiration" and of the "attachment" of the country. Those words have, Sir, perhaps been used with some slight stretch of their meaning with regard to politicians who, falling in the very midst of party contests, can hardly be described as having commanded the universal admiration and attachment of their fellow-countrymen. But I think these words applied to Mr. Gladstone at the present time are words wholly and absolutely appropriate, without a tinge of exaggeration. Then we go on to speak of the "high sense entertained of his rare and splendid gifts," of his "devoted labours in Parliament and in the great offices of State." We cast our eyes back over those sixty years which divided his first tenure of office from his last, and we feel that in those two generations he did indeed, if any man ever did, make full display of rare and splendid gifts, and did with ungrudging devotion give his labours to Parliament and to great offices of State. Therefore, Sir, it is with an absolute confidence that the Address is one which, not merely in its general purport, but in its particular terms, will meet with the sympathy and approval of every man in all parts of the House, whatever be his opinions, that I now venture to move:—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, that Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to give directions that the remains of the Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone be interred at the public charge, and that a monument be erected in the Collegiate Church

of St. Peter's, Westminster, with an inscription expressive of the public admiration and attachment, and of the high sense entertained of his rare and splendid gifts and his devoted labours in Parliament and in great offices of State, and to assure Her Majesty that this House will make good the expenses attending the same." . . . . [1898.]

## MISCELLANEOUS

### ATHLETICS

105. I AM here to plead not for a University but for a University necessity. To hear some people talk, you would almost suppose that athletics was a kind of parasitic growth upon modern educational institutions. I do not take that view, and I never have taken that view. If this were the place or the time—above all, if this were the audience—I think I could demonstrate that there are some subjects of academic study of great repute, of historical standing, which cannot claim to be equal in educational efficiency to some of the athletic pursuits now so ardently followed both in Scotland and in England. Patience, sobriety, courage, temper, discipline, subordination—all these are virtues necessary for the highest excellence, either at cricket or at football. I do not know that these virtues are produced by some subjects of study which I could mention, and I do not know that any greater good can be done to a place where young men are congregated than to give them every opportunity of pursuing these wholesome and noble exercises to the best possible advantage. But I think there is another point of view, and an even higher point of view, from which athletic exercises may be recommended to your favourable attention. For what does a University exist? It exists largely, no doubt, to foster that

disinterested love of knowledge, which is one of the highest of all gifts. It exists, no doubt, to give that professional training which is an absolute necessity in any modern civilised community. These great objects may no doubt be carried out without any elaborate equipment for athletic exercises, but I do not think that the duties of a modern University end there. A University, if I may speak from my own experience, and say what I believe to be the universal experience of all who have had the advantage of a University training—a University gives a man all through his life the sense that he belongs to a great community in which he spent his youth, which indeed he has left, but to which he still belongs, whose members are not merely the students congregated for the time being within the walls where they are pursuing their intellectual training, but are scattered throughout the world; but, though scattered, have never lost the sense that they still belong to the great University which gave them their education. That feeling—not the least valuable possession which a man carries away with him from a University life—that feeling may be fostered—is fostered, no doubt, by a community of education—by attending the same lectures, by passing the same examinations: but no influence fosters it more surely and more effectually than that feeling of common life which the modern athletic sports, as they have been developed in modern places of learning, give to all those who take an interest in such matters, whether as performers or as spectators.

[1896.]

106. The value of a University for educational purposes lies not principally in its examinations, not even wholly in its teaching, however admirable that teaching

may be. It lies, and must lie, in the collision of minds between student and student. We learn at all times of life, but perhaps most when we are young, as much from our contemporaries as from anybody else, and when we are young we learn from our contemporaries what no Professor, however eminent, can teach us. Therefore it is that while I admire the lives—admirable beyond any power of mine to express my admiration—the lives of those solitary students who, under great difficulties, come up to Edinburgh or some other University, and without intercourse with their fellows, doggedly and perseveringly pursue their studies—very often under most serious pressure of home difficulties—their course, however admirable, is not the course which can give them to the fullest those great advantages which are possessed by those whose lot is more happily cast than theirs. I therefore associate myself entirely with what Lord Rosebery dropped—perhaps as an *obiter dictum*—as to athletics. I do not think the athletic movement has been overdone—that is my personal opinion. I believe, on the contrary, that the intercourse between students which it has produced, the organisations to which it has given birth, and the good fellowship which it has secured, are of infinite educational value. . . . . [1898.]

### CYCLING

107. There is, without jesting, however, a certain connection between the problems presented by the vast aggregation of population which now exists within the area of London and the solution of some elements in that problem by the growth of cycling among all classes of the population. The urban population of this small

island is destined to grow, and the rural areas destined to diminish, and in this the greatest of all cities there is a grave danger that a large portion of the population may be deprived of any personal knowledge and experience of the joys of country life and the beauties of country scenery. But the cycle has saved us; and I am not exaggerating when I say that our grandfathers and great-grandfathers, at a time when London was but a small fraction of what it now is, had fewer opportunities of getting rapidly out of it than, in consequence largely of the cycle, we now enjoy. If that be so—and I speak from my own experience, as others can from theirs—there has been no more civilising invention in the present generation than the invention of the cycle, which is enjoyed by all classes, and by both sexes, and by all ages. There is none which is less dependent upon external circumstances, or upon preliminary organisation.

[1899.]

#### EXPERTS

108. I remember the time—I am not sure it has altogether gone by—when the word “expert” was anathema in the House of Commons and other representative assemblies. I remember the time when an expert was regarded as a person entirely immersed in the minute study of one aspect of one question, who on the strength of his investigations came forward and lectured the rest of the world, and from the height of his superior knowledge attempted to direct the course which the world ought to pursue. And if you go back a little further beyond the period I have just described, you find the expert was held in contempt; and beyond you get to a period not very remote in which the expert

was never heard at all. The expert is a modern growth —except in the law. In the law there always have been, and indeed always must be experts, and always ought to be experts. Whether they have ever, or have not, abused their position as experts, my learned friend on my left is more competent to say than I. But at all events, until comparatively recently, outside the law there was not concerned with public affairs any body of men who could be described as experts at all. The whole community was on the dead level of common ignorance. Those were the happy times in which any man of adequate industry and ability could really master all that was worth knowing contained in books; and the books in which he mastered them had no elaborate references at the bottom of the page to other authorities. Nor did you find at the end a bibliography containing a gigantic list of books which the author implied that he had read and suggested that you ought to read also. Those days have gone by; and it is happy, and it is fortunate, that they have gone by so far as the great social work of the community is concerned. It is quite impossible now that in any branch of learning, be it practical or be it theoretical, any man, whatever his power of industry, whatever his memory or capacity of observation be, can really master all that is worth mastering; and the result is that there is more and more coming a division of intellectual and practical labour,—inevitable, on the whole beneficial, but which, I think, nobody will deny has, and will have, its dangers.

I often think it a beneficent arrangement of our mundane affairs that absolute government went out just when the experts came in. It would be an awful thing to have an absolute Governor who was an expert. And

I think even the experts who are listening to me—I hope sympathetically—will be prepared to endorse that sentiment when I remind them that the super-expert, of whom I am speaking might possibly not belong to the same expert school as themselves. Now that danger we have escaped, and the difficulty we have to deal with is how in the first place to stimulate to the utmost all our ability and expert knowledge in every department, theoretical and practical, and then to turn it to the best account. That is the problem before modern society. You have got to use the experts, you have to improve the knowledge of experts, you have to help them in every way, by endowment and otherwise, to carry on their work. When they have carried it on, you have to turn it to account, and that is not always so easy a problem as at first sight it may appear. The first experts to deal with public affairs were the early economists, and they took the view, which was a convenient view from the politician's standpoint, that the less communities and governments meddled with anything the better for the community. They held quite sincerely, and with considerable plausibility, that politicians, Ministers, Members of Parliament, agitators, were so stupid that they had much better not meddle with things they did not understand; and that attitude was reflected beyond the sphere of early economics into the adjacent sphere of social work. But nobody holds that old doctrine in its entirety at the present time. Everybody recognises—at least, so far as my experience goes, everybody who counts recognises—as an indisputable truth that the community as a whole, acting through its central government and organisation, cannot treat as no affair of its own the general well-being of special sections of the community.

You cannot stand aside and merely "keep the peace," so to speak, as the old phrase went. A Government cannot act merely as a gigantic embodied policeman. Other duties fall to it; other duties must be carried out, and they cannot be carried out unless we know in the first place how to produce experts and then how to use them. . . . . [1911.]

## NATIONALITY

109. The spirit of nationality must never be allowed to grow into the spirit of particularism. If each nation were an absolute flat, unvaried plane of culture, each nation being a mere replica—with all the uninteresting flatness of the copy—of every other nation, the world would lose greatly. It would lose also, perhaps it would lose even more, if each community which could trace some separate tradition of civilisation for itself were to say, "That tradition, and that tradition alone, will I develop: I will not join in the common chorus of civilised humanity, but I will sing my own tune in my own way, and I will take no share in the common work of literature and imaginative development." Those are the two rocks, the two dangers, which lie before us. I am an immense believer in these separate nationalities. I think they give a quality, a tone, a variety to the common work of Western culture which can never be got in any other way. But, like every other very good thing, they can be abused. You do find people who hold extravagant views of particularism and would have a purely Scotch, a purely Irish, a purely Welsh—whatever it may be—literature, music, art. That is not the way to do it. It is not the way it was done in the great days of Welsh

literature. It is not the way it was done when Scotland contributed, as Scotland, its quota to British literature. It is not the way it ever will be done; and it is not the way, I am convinced, this Society<sup>1</sup> ever desires it should be done. It works through these records of marvellous historic and literary interest with a view of making every inhabitant of this island at the same time remember his origin, the origin and history of the particular part of the island in which he lives, and yet feel in full consciousness that all this leads up to the greater and fuller national life in which the particular is not forgotten, is not ignored, loses none of its effects, but joins in the full and harmonious chord in which the notes may be different but in which the effect is a unity. . . [1909.]

<sup>1</sup> The Cymrodorion (Welsh) Society.

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- 3-6. Speech to Labour Co-partnership Association, London, December 1, 1908 (*The Association's Report of Proceedings*).

### COPYRIGHT.

7. Speech on Copyright Bill, House of Commons, April 7, 1911 (*Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series*, Vol. 23).

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8. Speech in House of Commons Debate upon erection of Memorial within the precincts of the Palace of Westminster, February 23, 1900 (*Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series*, Vol. 79).
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105. Speech at opening of Bazaar in aid of Edinburgh University Athletics Field, November 19, 1896 (*Scotsman*).
106. Speech to Associated Societies of Edinburgh University, October 25, 1898 (*Scotsman*).

#### *Cycling.*

107. Speech at Dinner of National Cyclists' Union, March 24, 1899 (*Times*).

#### *Experts.*

108. Speech at National Conference on the Prevention of Destitution, London, May 30, 1911 (*Report of Proceedings of Conference*).

#### *Nationality.*

109. Speech to Honourable Society of Cymrodorion, October 21, 1909 (*Times*).









